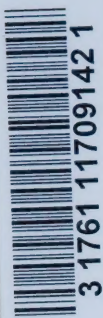


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Canadian Radio-Television
Commission

Conseil de la Radio-Télévision
Canadienne

Government
Publications

A Resource for the Active Community



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A resource for the active community

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Foreword

Community participation in broadcasting, radio, television, and cable television is young, alive and remarkably diverse.

✓ The CRTC has consistently encouraged all forms of community expression in broadcasting, while leaving the community free to express itself in its own way, as it wants to. The Commission has avoided involvement which might constrain the development of new forms of participation, access, and expression.

This publication, therefore, should not be considered as an expression of CRTC policy or even as guidelines on how community expression might best be achieved. It is, instead, a collection of articles gathered from people who have themselves been involved in community broadcasting for the past several years.

The experiences related, and the ideas propounded, range widely. They are indeed as varied in their approach, from the practical, technical details to the

abstract and sometimes controversial philosophies, as any community anywhere might well reflect.

They are presented in this form, in this publication, as a possible aid and stimulus to the many community groups across Canada who have been, and are, working to involve the community in broadcasting and who often express to the CRTC a sense of discouragement in being alone and isolated in scattered communities.

The CRTC distributes this publication as a step toward allowing all such groups to share the thoughts, awareness, and experiences of others. It is hoped that the articles will increase understanding of the ways in which broadcasting can be used as a resource for the active community.

Pierre Juneau,
Chairman,
Canadian Radio-Television Commission

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List of contributors

Doug Baer

Richard Bertrand

Stephen Callary

André Chagnon

Mary Eberts

Colin Low

Vianne Lyman

Gail Martin

Linda Mitchell

Graham Nevin

Wendy O'Flaherty

W.G. Pither

CRTC Staff

Gordon Galbraith

Patrick Gossage

Steve Moss

Cathey Richards

Mario Santerre

Nancy Wright

Wired World Inc. Kitchener-Waterloo

Ottawa Cablevision Ltd.

Coordinator Kival (un projet de télévision communautaire)

Vidéotron Ltée

University of Toronto, Law School

National Film Board

Simon Fraser University, Department of Communication Studies

Simon Fraser University, Department of Communication Studies


Freelance journalist

Kival (un projet de télévision communautaire)

Freelance consultant

Premier Cablevision, Vancouver

Under the co-ordination of Barry Kiefl



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University of Toronto

<https://archive.org/details/31761117091421>

Understanding radio and television

C.P. Gossage

The articles in this publication invite you to think about new ways you can use radio and television to accomplish some of the ambitions you might have for your community, your group, or yourself.

These contributions explain actual experiences in using radio and television for new purposes. Some experiences—which are still experiments—reveal people trying to make a complicated tool do things they are not quite sure it was designed for; others seem to have confidently established successful new uses that have added permanently to the number of services radio and television provide.

We tend, however, to take radio and television so much for granted, that it's useful to describe clearly and briefly just how what might be called "conventional" radio and television work, how they serve us presently. It is only by knowing how a complicated system works that it can be adapted to new uses. Also you can only understand the tribulations and accomplishments of those trying to actively participate in their own radio and television programming by being aware of the way these media have been traditionally used.

The individual's chances of getting his first choice of entertainment or information in broadcasting when he wants it are limited; in modern merchandising, with its staggering array of consumer products, his chances are pretty good. Broadcasting is a very special kind of market-place, in which *individual* needs and tastes are very difficult to serve. (A discussion of how treatment of the audience differs in the new uses of the media is found in the articles "Community television's impact" and "Media as mirror," later in this publication.)

As more stations open, or more TV channels become available on cable television, that situation doesn't change as much as you might expect. There are over 60 separate radio stations available in New York City, but only four really different types of station.

This phenomenon has been explained by broadcasting's need to be as appealing as possible in what is offered. If your main measure of success is the number of votes or simple yes's you get then it is difficult to put on something that will please a few very much, but that the majority will find objectionable.

This explanation of how the audience's general taste rather than the individual's or smaller group's specific choices or needs are met on radio and television can ignore the very important responsibilities that legislators and regulatory bodies have urged on broadcasters, on behalf of the public.

•There is a national public responsibility which has been publicly stated over the years. This responsibility is best filled when Canadians everywhere share common experiences and learn to understand the various

parts of Canada better through broadcasting. It also involves Canadians being able to see and hear Canadian programming of high standard.

•There is a local licensing responsibility which means that all stations do a certain amount of programming which connects them directly to the community they are licensed to serve.

Where is the public's direct input to this structure of duties and obligations? How do its own individual or collective desires for certain types of programming or services get recognized?

If the fact is faced that each individual can have neither his own transmitter, nor a station broadcasting exclusively to him, then the audience's elected representatives or trustees set the rules for public accountability and responsibility of those who do have stations.

Spaces have recently been made in this system, especially on local programming channels on cable television, which exist primarily for the public at large to participate directly in broadcasting. This publication concerns the experiences of those who have used these small spaces to establish an entirely different relationship between the radio or television broadcaster and the audience. Their importance therefore is not measured by comparing these experiences to the system as it is structured and operated now, but by what they add to the system and how they might create a different structure parallel to it.

The traditional relationship between the broadcaster and the audience or public is most directly established in the programming provided and viewed or listened to. What kind of programming, what kind of services are offered, and how do we use them in the conventional system?

The basic elements of mass appeal programming, whether on radio or TV, predate both. The familiar plots and situations of stage melodrama, the domestic permutations and relationships of serial fiction, the kind of action and movement developed in the early years of silent film, the experiences of far-off places and exotic locales, the stand-up tradition of comedy, the productions of comedy and performance in the music hall, the productions of vaudeville, the ritual of sport and competition, the personal lives and comings and goings of the famous or powerful—these are some of the standard elements of entertainment which radio largely adapted, then lost to some extent to television. (For a developed discussion of how conventional forms have been adapted to new uses see "Community programme formats" in this publication.)

These forms have diverted audiences, engaged their emotions, and exacted their loyalties for generations.

To this broadcasting has added news and public affairs, based to a great extent on print and photo-journalism. Radio added recorded music, the popular songs and melodies of the day.

Perhaps the weather reports, time checks, and traffic reports on radio, and the very real and vital information both radio and TV provide during emergencies or disasters, best illustrate the basic features of a different kind of relationship with the audience. These services directly help us in making decisions in very real and immediate situations. They provide information for action. They relate to us directly at that moment, to our immediate and real needs.

Occasionally a broadcaster will use his station as a sort of private channel to get information, for instance of a death in the family, to some individual who cannot be reached in any other way. The CBC Northern Service, and some remote, isolated stations are still used to pass individual, personal messages. (New developments in personal and information services are discussed in "A survey of activities" and "Access by community groups" in this publication.)

The combination of the telephone and radio (or television) sometimes permits individual expression according to need at that moment.

Such services to the community, and access to the airwaves by open line, are distinct breaks with forms that had established a largely spectator relationship with the audience. When the radio tells you of bad icing conditions on the local highway, you are no longer a spectator but a receiver of essential information.

The real challenge, therefore, to those seeking new uses for broadcasting is to turn spectators into participants, perhaps even to provide programming experiences which will prompt members of the audience to turn off their sets and *do* something—pursue further study of a subject, become involved in some voluntary action, further develop an interest, or solve a real problem.

The challenge is not to build an amateur sub-system with the same structures and forms but to create entirely different uses for the technology of radio and

television. The articles that follow demonstrate that this process of creating is beginning.

Despite the increasing interest in new uses of "media," as the initiated like to refer to radio, television, and video tools, despite the hope and idealism often expressed, it must be underlined that only a beginning is being made.

The greatest single problem in achieving any further consolidation, in getting beyond this point of departure, requires a major effort at increasing the public's awareness that *they can participate in the most mysterious of all means of communication.*

In his article "Media as mirror," Colin Low, one of the pioneer innovators in the use of media for attaining community objectives, states: "We have a long way to go before we learn to use media effectively in creative social terms. People must understand that rather fundamental values are at stake. They will need to see the potential threat of media—its effect upon their children—the relation between it and family. They will have to see other characteristics—the tendency to homogenize different living cultures... and to convert masses into passive spectators."

Many other veterans trying to interest the public in using radio, television, or the community channel on cable television for the communities' own purposes are realizing that public education must be their foremost objective. As one long-time worker in community television said recently: "People must be made conscious of channel 10's (the local community channel on cable) *existence*, and the fact that it can be different. I plan on going out and getting people actively involved in amateur television. That will take a lot of time but we've got nothing but time."

The best one can hope for from a publication like this is that it does convince some readers that they can do something themselves with the most powerful instruments of communication and image-making that man has invented—that some will understand what conventional radio and television are, what these media can in part at least become, and that they can play an active role in that development.

A survey of activities

Linda Mitchell

By June 1970 people were talking about the Fogo Island experiment. Across the country anyone interested in communications was involved in intense discussion. It seemed that the National Film Board had sent a small crew headed by Colin Low to an isolated island off Newfoundland, its aim no less than an attempt to use film to change the quality of the residents' lives. It was not a new idea, but in fact one which Low had been playing with since a Klondike film in 1954; it was, however, a deliberate attempt to use visual images to effect social change.

The rest is Canadian communications history. Using techniques they literally evolved on the spot, Low and his crew documented the day-to-day lives of Fogo Island citizens. The people had the right to edit footage of themselves and to decide where and to whom it could be shown for discussion. This involvement in the process helped the residents create a new way of looking at themselves and their community.

The facts available indicated that Fogo Island was in desperate straits when the NFB crew arrived: 60% on welfare, low morale, and the provincial government trying to persuade residents to consent to resettlement in a "more viable urban area." When the Fogo Island people agreed to participate in the joint NFB-Memorial University Extension Department programme they had their backs to the wall and few if any options.

The benefits to the community were immediate and enormous: morale lifted, and old skills such as the construction of long-liners were converted into new cottage industries. The future had become possible and it was under their control.

The Fogo Island experiment has been thoroughly documented in the Challenge for Change newsletter, Access. Reverberations caused by its success are still bouncing around the country. Fogo Island has become a touchstone, a focal point for all people involved in community communications—especially for those who believe it is necessary for individuals to stop being passive, those who believe that people must attempt to control not only the circumstances that affect their lives, but also the media which interpret and make public those circumstances.

In many ways this paper could be entitled, "After Fogo Island: What?" Much of our community communication experience has been affected by the particular magic of that success on Fogo Island, although not always beneficially.

Canada has a substantial and innovative tradition in communication. The logical reason is the sheer impossibility of our geography. There is one other, a personal suspicion of mine I hate to mention—we talk a lot. (We have the highest rate of telephone use in the world.)

Take this background, and the success on Fogo Island, and add three other factors: one social, one technological, and one regulatory. The result is the incredible growth of community programming since 1970. For instance, the development of VTR (Video Tape Recorder) would probably never have been as fully exploited or expanded if it hadn't been for the congruent sixties movement toward grass roots politics, community organizations, native communications, and citizens' input into urban planning. And perhaps none of these would have meant much if we hadn't had Fogo Island—proof that social change could and did happen through the use of images and participation.

This delicately balanced web of social forces and technological achievement received added impetus in July 1971 when the CRTC formally announced that it meant to encourage owners of cable systems to open and maintain one channel for the use of the community. By making this provision for a broadcast outlet, the CRTC crystallized the situation, and community programming started to grow and assume definite forms.

The result has been broad exploration of the alternatives in citizens' communications. In the last three years Canadians have demonstrated not only a vested interest in communication but also a firm conviction that it's perfectly O.K. to get out there and try. And that's what this paper is all about: "A survey of activities."

Why? how? what medium?

The easiest way to examine the various problems, solutions, alternatives, and decisions involved in community programming is simply to develop a fictitious group, environment, and goal. We can use it to explore the real choices facing the people who become involved in this work.

Let's say our group exists in a middle-sized city, population about 100,000. The city has two major industries, a rolling mill and a potash plant just outside town; otherwise it exists as a service centre for the surrounding agricultural area. It has a university, an arts centre, a gallery, in fact all the usual amenities. It has a substantial Indian and Métis population concentrated in the poorer areas of town, as well as many second-generation people of Ukrainian origin.

Our city possesses the following commercial media: one newspaper (morning and afternoon editions), three AM stations (one owned by the firm that owns the newspaper and one CBC), one FM station, two television stations (CBC and CTV), and two cable television systems, both with community programming channels, which geographically divide the city into two tidy halves.

There are also two weekly newspapers which are community-produced. One of these simply provides an information service about local events, the other offers a left-based interpretation and background of local political activities.

The two cable systems have a limited amount of portable VTR equipment and accessories, as well as studio facilities. There is also considerable audio and audio-visual equipment as well as a studio at the university and the technical high school, but this is not generally available for public use.

Our group (the North End Community Planning Association) has been engaged for two years with city hall in joint planning for their neighbourhood. The neighbourhood is older, heterogeneous, largely inhabited by workers, the elderly, some Indians and Métis, and a sprinkling of university students. Since they are close to the city centre, about a dozen high rises have been erected (at the expense of people's homes and park land), and this gave the neighbourhood of 16,000 the impetus to form the association and force the city to include it in the planning process.

The group has a broad membership but not a terribly broad base in the community; it has found keeping the neighbourhood informed of its progress its most difficult job. Although the members consistently placed stories in the community newspapers, they realize they aren't reaching enough people. They sense a showdown coming with the city over the final stage of planning. This decides them. They must provide more information, more consistently, to their people if they can expect support when the crunch comes. But how?

Their first attempt is with the commercial media. The reaction is almost identical from them all. Broadcasters and newspapermen are more than willing to do a story, their only question is: what's the issue? The group executive hold a press conference and distribute a "backgrounder." As the stories come out they realize that the information they wanted to get across has been ruthlessly chopped, subtly altered, and rearranged to suit the needs of "the story" or "the item" as seen by the reporter.

At this point the members realize that if the commercial media are to serve any useful purpose as far as they are concerned, they are going to have to control the information. But they can't and they know it. So, reserving commercial media for specific instances, they decide to look at alternatives which will enable them to control their material.

The first item is: what do they want to say? just exactly what do they want to tell their neighbours? They agree they want to tell them three things: their plans for the neighbourhood; the city's plans; and their feeling that the city is about to disallow their plans and proceed with its own.

Their informal survey reveals that besides general meetings, posters, and the community newspapers there are only two alternatives outside the commercial media available to them: producing a programme for

one of the local cable television channels, and packaging freelance items for the CBC.

Our group lacks the skill to do radio items for the CBC so the only alternative within the alternative media is cable television, about which the members also know next to nothing.

Upon investigation they learn that the two cable television owners in town have very different interpretations of community programming. One system believes in training community people in the techniques necessary to use the medium and letting them handle the equipment (even lending it to them to use outside the studio for location shots). This owner provides producers (animators or facilitators are other common terms) whose job is to help groups define their programming goals, prepare the programme, in short, any kind of assistance needed to produce the programme according to the group's specifications.

Also, this owner is well aware that once they've defined their needs groups may wish to produce one one-hour programme, one half-hour programme, or two one-hour shows, etc.—in other words he realizes that the frequency of their programming depends on their needs and will alter as their situation in the community alters. While this makes his scheduling a fairly tricky process, he recognizes rigidity is a disservice to the groups and the community he serves.

The second cable system has elaborate studio facilities for the community channel, but because it programmes with expensive colour equipment it is reluctant to let groups do location work. It is also reluctant to let groups have hands-on equipment. From our group's point of view this system has two other major drawbacks: it is not fond of handling contentious political issues (and our group has sensed that its issue will definitely become contentious), and it prefers groups to agree to do a thirteen week "season" of half-hour shows.

Our group knows that the members are all volunteers who work full time, ignorant of VTR work, and they just don't have that much to say right now. They can't commit the group to thirteen shows. At the same time four or five of their members are extremely interested in learning about the process and are willing to devote some time to training.

They approach the first cable television owner and discover that, since their neighbourhood is within the boundaries of the second system, they should be programming out of that studio. They manage to arrange to make the programme at the first system and have it bicycled to the second because the first owner decides that the general issue of citizens' participation in urban planning is important enough and has enough general interest to warrant its exposure to the total population.

Goals are clarified and the programme is planned with the aid of the producer. It is decided to use portapak footage of the neighbourhood as highlights and to

display vulnerable areas. Interviews, also using portapaks, are conducted door-to-door soliciting various points of view. All of this work is done by the group. The city planners and politicians are interviewed for their views and graphics of the two alternative plans are prepared.

A format for this material is designed in conjunction with the producer, and the group selects three of its members who will appear as a panel in the last ten minutes of the programme to put forward and clarify the group's point of view.

The cable television licensee schedules them editing time for their portapak footage and two hours of studio time to put the programme together. They decide it is too complex to do live and it is taped to be shown the following week.

The taping goes well. Those members functioning as technicians are obviously pleased with their newly acquired skills, and everyone agrees that the panel's presentation of the group's viewpoint was masterful. At the owner's suggestion they had advertised the programme in the TV listings and they also distributed a leaflet to every home in the neighbourhood. They settle back to wait, eager for next Monday.

During the making of the programme they noticed some changes in the group. Some people loved the work and had thrown themselves into it with more enthusiasm than they'd shown for anything to date. Others, disgruntled by the process, had gone around muttering darkly about video freaks and Marshall McLuhan.

Everybody had noticed those three weeks had eaten up enormous amounts of time and energy and they had neglected the group's regular business. They decided that whatever the result of the coming programme they couldn't undertake to programme regularly without some elaborate restructuring and additional volunteers. There was also a general feeling that it had been a damn good learning experience for everyone, even the sceptics.

The programme was shown on Monday night and the members eagerly awaited feedback, expecting calls, letters, etc. from their constituents. They didn't get many so they checked out the cable television systems and found they hadn't received many either.

This led to serious discussion. Who had watched the show? How many? How were they to find out what the reaction had been? They decided to call a general meeting to try to answer these questions, although such meetings were difficult to organize and were usually reserved for very serious occasions. At the meeting they discovered a very small percentage had watched, but those who had were enthusiastic. In the discussion that followed the people who hadn't seen it on cable television wondered if they could see it. Could the group show it again in the community hall?

A call to the cable television company ascertained that the tape hadn't been erased yet and a screening was arranged. This time the group organized a telephone campaign to reach people and issued press releases to

the local media. There was a good turn-out and, after the screening, a two-hour discussion. There was unanimous agreement that this was the best meeting they'd ever had—people dealt with the issues raised in the programme and stuck to the point. The meeting arrived at a consensus about the presentation to be made to city hall in the next month.

After the general meeting the group sat down and assessed what had happened. Obviously, making the tape and showing it on cable television had been important. Equally obvious, having the general meeting view the tape had been important because the tape had provoked such a worthwhile discussion. Although the general meeting had been enthusiastic about making more tapes—maybe even making one to show city hall their needs—the group was cautious. All knew the enormous resources of time (and if they were to do it frequently, money) involved. They decided to appoint a sub-committee to find out if they should do more programming, and on what basis, and also to recommend a way the group could divide the work-load equitably if they continued to programme, even on a sporadic basis.

A fairy tale, obviously—no community group in Canada was ever so coherent and so together. But it is a convenient way to illustrate some of the alternatives and the hazards facing a group undertaking community programming. Although an over-simplified fiction, this example was created to establish a framework within which you can examine the choices and decisions of the real groups which are the backbone of the rest of this paper. Remember as you read: every group and individual programming is doing it for different, specific goals and has its/their own approach. And every group works out of a different context: rural, urban, small town, ethnic, social change, hobbies, religion, native, education—the combinations and variations are as diverse as the country itself.

CABLE TELEVISION

One group that is almost a text-book example of programming without hassles is the Ottawa Senior Citizens Council. Unlike a neighbourhood community group, the audience for the programme is scattered throughout the city, so the programme is made at Skyline Cable and bicycled to Ottawa Cablevision.

It produces a weekly half-hour show called "Coming of Age," a mix of interviews, portapak tapes of get-togethers etc., and nutritional and health information. The show is hosted by one or two of a team of volunteer senior citizens.

The Council has handled the organizational chores rather simply and members have evolved a stable but flexible working arrangement. They created a broadcast committee which bears all responsibility for the show and which reports to the Council periodically. They also applied for and got a New Horizons grant which enabled them to buy a portapak and pay expenses.

Aware of their ignorance of the medium, the broadcast committee hired John Blake, a young Ottawa man with broadcast experience, to co-ordinate and produce the show. Blake, an easy-going type, hit it off with them from the start. "They're very easy to work with," he says, "extremely co-operative, and I feel that we have created genuine interest among Ottawa senior citizens in the show."

"We had a rather informal survey done last summer and the figure reported was 26% of Ottawa seniors watched the show on a regular basis. And if you know anything about the ratings on the community channel, that's a phenomenal figure."

Blake's only complaint is that he wishes he could get the seniors more involved in the programming decisions. To this end he's gently nudged the broadcast committee into assuming responsibility for four different areas, including nutrition and reading various books and articles aloud for those with failing vision.

Doing the show made Blake conscious of the needs of senior citizens and, elated by its success, he and the seniors undertook in the spring of 1973 to produce a series of eight one-hour programmes dealing with different facets of retirement. It was shown several times on the local community channels and a government department is now using it as a teaching tool in its pre-retirement programme for employees.

The senior citizens' organization is very smooth, very simple, and very successful. Having one person employed full time reduces the demands made on the members, and programming for a specific audience with clearly defined needs means less frustration and greater empathy between audience and programmers.

People programming on cable television have consistently found it easier when their audience is clearly defined. For this reason one of the most successful and most frequent users of the community channels in urban areas is Canada's ethnic groups. Cable television access has often provided the first opportunity for ethnic groups to use electronic media. Their strong commitment to community programming has its roots in print; Canada has always had lots of ethnic newspapers.

Studio Italiano has been programming in Toronto since the winter of 1971. The Italian community has responded with enthusiasm; it now has a volunteer staff of 30 and programme once a day on four of Toronto's cable systems. Studio Italiano operates largely under the impetus of two individuals: Nick Fortunato and Sylvia Pylpiak. Their programming is a blend of news, information, sports (soccer), and music—all, of course, done in Italian. Typical Studio Italiano programmes are: "Caleidoscopio," one hour of location interviews including topics such as religion, immigration, drugs, and politics; "Telegiornale," half-hour international, national, and local news, editorial, and a world sports section; and "A Che Gioco Giochiamo," an hour-long musical variety show.

In order to cope with the geographic spread of their audience they have always programmed on four of Toronto's 12 systems and had their tapes bicycled back and forth. This creates some hassles for them and their aim is their own mobile facility. However they are well satisfied with their current situation and the co-operation they obtain from the systems they use.

Although Fortunato and Pylpiak must be given considerable credit for the success of Studio Italiano, it is also a function of serving an already established community. On the whole Canada's ethnic minorities have not been well served by the media. The large amount of community programming they have undertaken across the country indicates this and illustrates how necessary a closely knit community with many common bonds is to successful programming.

The sense of community found in rural and small-town Canada is legendary. Isolation makes people much more dependent on their neighbours and our pioneer tradition stresses neighbourliness. So it is not surprising to find highly successful small cable systems functioning strongly in their community in these areas.

The system in Campbell River, BC is the only community-owned cable television system in the country. And in Madoc, Ontario a store owner has involved an entire village in running the community channel on his system.

Madoc is a community of 1400, 22 miles east of Belleville in the middle of Hastings County, a mixed farming area. The cable television system with approximately 400 subscribers is owned by Gordon Pigden and Glen Nickle.

Pigden runs his community programming operation out of a studio above his store. His approach ("every community needs a soapbox") is uniquely suited to the area and its people. As yet he has not made a cent out of his system—he's probably only one of several owners in the country who plough all their profits back into the community programming budget.

Every second Sunday evening the citizens of Madoc switch away from the big channels and sit down to catch up on local events. Pigden and his volunteer crew programme during the two weeks and then tie it all into one package for Sunday night viewing. There is no fixed time limit, although most of their segments average around twenty minutes.

The Madoc operation is straight-forward. Everything is done by a volunteer crew—trained by Pigden and "graduate" trainees. They take on almost any local event: nomination meetings, sports, drama, the local fair. They also have a music and variety show for local talent and regular interviews with various people in the community.

Penny Harrop, a housewife who works as a technician, is enthusiastic about Channel 4. "There's more interest in community affairs," she says. "People are more aware of what's going on, what people are doing."

Programming is not totally restricted to Sunday night. Emergencies, such as a fire, are broadcast immediately.

Special events such as elections and the discussion about the possible establishment of a medical centre in the village are broadcast as they happen.

Pigden has a number of ideas he plans to try out in the future, including a phone-in talk show. "This is what any community needs," he says, "a place or medium where people can get together and talk. In a big city, you may not know your next-door neighbour; it's a shame. You maybe have a lot in common to enjoy—if you can get together."

Like the ethnic groups, the religious people are among the most consistent, long-term, high technical quality programmers in urban areas. Their programming succeeds for many of the same reasons ethnic programming does: they serve a definite community with already established common interests, they have a clearly defined goal, they are interested in the product, not the process. They're not out to liberate the myth of television so they don't want hands-on equipment. They work in harmony with the cable television systems because they don't stress innovation and experimentation. Groups such as The Process, Toronto and Univision, Toronto have uniformly excellent technical quality.

Perhaps the most obvious difference between ethnic and religious programming is in the content. Ethnic programming is news and entertainment oriented, with, of course, the particular focus of that ethnic group and its perceptions of Canada. The religious people tend to deal with the larger society and far from supplementing mass media material, they tend to go beyond it. Some of their programming goes far beyond the "religious" label and deals with human rights issues which are seldom tackled.

Religious groups, like ethnic groups, tend to be very together and are able to withstand the rigors of weekly production. In fact, Univision is usually three months ahead in its programming, almost unheard of in community communications. This kind of solidarity results in well thought out shows, uniform conception of content, and a consistent point of view, factors which are often missing from community programming on cable television.

Cable television use represents just one facet of the alternatives open to people interested in community programming. Others such as radio and alternative uses for VTR I'll get to in a bit, but while we're still dealing with visual images I'd like to mention UHF (Ultra High Frequency) and CITY TV (Channel 79) in Toronto, as well as CTVO in Hull (to be on the air in the fall of 1974). CTVO and CITY are two of the first Canadian UHF licensees.

UHF has yet to be systematically developed in Canada although there are several hundred stations operating in the United States. In order to receive UHF a "loop" antenna must be connected to the set. Sets acquired before 1968 may not have this capacity. It is also possible to get CITY by subscribing to one of Toronto's 12 cable systems and this is the more common method.

Channel 79 has the same financial base as any other commercial broadcast organization: they must sell enough advertising. Channel 79 represents one commercial station which attempts to give citizens regular access to the medium. They have no interest in breaking down television's myths or giving citizens technical training in its use; but they do provide two shows which are geared to citizen participation. "Catch 79" is for groups and "Free For All" is for individuals. The number and variety of groups who use "Catch 79" is astonishing: Young Women in Trouble, Gay Artists, Toronto City Hall PR, Gay Alliance Towards Equality, The Process, Croatian Children's Group Choir, Spanish Immigrants—the list is endless. All decisions about appearances are made by Vlad Handera, Channel 79's young community programming director. Although groups are free to make their presentations more or less as they choose, the shows are all studio produced and major programming decisions such as length and format are under Handera's control. There is no provision for continuous community representation and the show is more issue than information oriented.

"Free For All," the show for individuals, runs to a slightly less rigid conception. It's done live, and the hour before air time people arrive and a rough order of appearance is sorted out. Handera says the only reason people couldn't appear would simply be a lack of time and anyone who doesn't get on is invited to return the following week.

Handera says, "I sit in the control room and I'm as curious as anyone about what's going to happen next. We get all types and kinds of people: the mayor, the president of the Jewish Defence League, a guy who played spoons for five minutes—you name it, it's probably happened on 'Catch 79.' One night the president of the Canadian Nazi Party came on, apologized for his previous position, for discriminating against Jews, and his fascist views in general. He then resigned his presidency and walked out. I was so astounded I just sat there. By the time I came to and went to talk to him, he'd disappeared. I've never seen him since."

Channel 79 also produces "People Who Sing Together," a choir show. According to Handera it has a consistently loyal audience. Any choir that wants to can appear.

In July 1973 CTVO in Hull became Canada's first community-based group in the country to be granted a licence for a UHF television station. Their method of financing as a co-operative has never been attempted in Canadian broadcasting before. CTVO is selling shares in the station, \$10 for common and \$100 for preferred shares that can be converted to 12 common shares. The owners (anyone may buy a share) will function as a co-operative, electing a board of directors to manage the station. All programming will be in French, providing a second service that French-speaking people in the capital area have wanted for years. At the moment they propose sixteen and a half hours a week of local origination and community programming, but are still in the process of working out the structural details.

There is no doubt about the support they receive from the community. At the hearing for their licence application in Ottawa in July 1973 hundreds of supporters turned out, all wearing buttons identifying them with that application. They have been holding get-togethers such as suppers, both to raise money and to keep people informally abreast of their progress. Their approach has been pragmatic and hard-headed. This attitude should create an exciting opportunity for Ottawa-Hull's francophone community.

RADIO

Community programming is certainly not confined to visual presentation. TV production simply makes a good place to start an article. It's interesting that a lot of people just beginning to do community programming also tend to start with VTR, but frequently work their way through to other media. VTR programming on cable is definitely the glamour end of the community programming business, but it does make heavy demands on its users.

In the last few years there has been a steady increase in radio as a community programming medium. Radio has many obvious advantages over VTR: it is cheaper, more immediate, more flexible, less intimidating, and it is much easier to produce good quality audio tapes. Above all, radio can be used in areas where television has not penetrated, where people live in isolation totally incomprehensible to us in the South, and where radio is a life-line as well as a source of information and entertainment.

I have divided the radio section into two parts: community programming done in the North by the CBC through its LPRT (Low Power Relay Transmitter) outlets, and programming done outside the CBC by community groups.

Wired World, a Kitchener-Waterloo based community group, last year was licensed by the CRTC. The history of Wired World is interesting and deserves fairly thorough study because the group represents two phenomena: the tendency to move away from VTR, and the miracles that can be accomplished if a group has a broad, solid community base and some dedicated workers.

Waterloo County in southern Ontario, the area served by Wired World, takes in Kitchener, Waterloo, and Cambridge and has a population of 250,000, 110,000 of whom live in Kitchener. It has a strong Dutch and German Lutheran tradition, rooted in the initial period of immigration in the late 19th century to southern Ontario's rich farmland. Now a heavily industrialized area containing a mixture of light and heavy industry, it is surrounded by wealthy farming communities.

Wired World started life as a VTR access and training group. It dispersed its efforts throughout the community, making VTR accessible to such diverse interests as a gym teacher and a treatment home for alcoholics. It quickly became evident to them that VTR work and programming on the local channel had two drawbacks.

The first was that all technical production at the cable television studio was in the hands of the cable personnel. Doug Baer of Wired World felt that "it is desirable that citizens have the opportunity to produce programming technically, as well as in content. Television is a complex medium. Radio is easier to use, the hardware is cheaper, programmes can be produced faster, and there are more listeners than on cable television." The second drawback was the psychological reaction to VTR. Wired World found that radio was much less inhibiting, people were far more willing to become involved in programming, and there was less tendency to become involved in the process and greater emphasis on content.

Switching to audio immediately posed the problem of how to broadcast. A local FM station, CHYM, donated two hours of air time a week and they were away. Within months the community response was strong and enthusiastic and Wired World decided to explore the possibilities of acquiring a licence for an open-access communications facility. By obtaining grants they put together an application and DOC agreed to help them locate a usable frequency. Applying for any kind of communications licence in Canada is a lengthy and expensive business, and Wired World had to exercise all their ingenuity to acquire the necessary expertise and facilities for nothing or next to nothing.

The first necessity was to locate a frequency, which is never an easy job. This was the period of greatest strain for the group. Despite the fact that they needed only a low-power frequency, there were many complications involving the maintenance of the "minimum spacing" regulations and outstanding Canadian agreements with the US in regard to border frequencies. The frequency hunt nearly finished Wired World. Working in conjunction with DOC, but without an engineer, they spent several months locating frequencies which looked as if they should be available, only to discover they weren't. It is remembered as a time of endless calculations and crushing disappointments. Finally a frequency was found, cleared through DOC, and formal application for a broadcast licence was made to the CRTC.

At the CRTC hearing the Wired World presentation was extremely impressive and the transcript of the public hearing should be required reading for any group thinking of applying for an FM licence (it is available from Information Canada). The hearing clearly illustrated the nature of the facility Wired World intended to provide for the citizens of the community: complete access.

In order to make this more than a theory, Wired World worked and continues to work on equipment modifications. "Most hardware just isn't user-oriented," says David Gillick of Wired World. "We have made some very interesting discoveries about equipment use and maintenance. We'd like to share them and we'd like to see manufacturers modifying hardware along the same lines." (See "Community radio programming facilities" in this publication.)

Wired World's approach to funding is equally pragmatic: if you're providing a genuine service to a broad enough spectrum of people, you'll get support. If not, you won't. It has established a system whereby individuals, businesses, groups, or institutions can become patrons. For example, half-hour patrons make a contribution of \$15 per week, ensuring a half-hour of programming each week for 13 weeks. There are also one-hour, two-hour and five-hour patrons. Wired World has been recognized by the federal government as a charitable organization so all donations are tax-deductible. Patronage is evenly distributed among programmes in the morning, afternoon, and evening periods.

Wired World's programming is as diverse as the community it serves: breakfast programmes, women's and consumers' programmes, senior citizens' programmes, and so on. It also has a show by and for children, as well as live theatre presentations and offerings from local musicians.

By the time this is published Wired World will be on the air, broadcasting from a transmitter whose site costs \$1 a year, a testament to dogged individuals and a community willing to support innovation.

Out on the West Coast, another radio project of a completely different nature has achieved startling success. The RAVEN (Radio and Audio Visual Education Network) Society, now three years old, uses a single side-band radio frequency to solve inter-communications problems between BC Indian bands separated by large distances and sometimes virtually inaccessible. The RAVEN concept is simple. Each band has a receiver which it rents from the society for \$1000 a year. The receiver is manned by volunteer labour.

Executive Secretary Chief Arnold "Bud" Recalma describes its function this way: "If we want to arrive at a consensus on any issue we send out a message saying there'll be a meeting at a certain time. Using the radio network the chiefs talk, refer back to band members, and reach a decision. It enables us to act decisively, quickly, and as a unit. The network also has obvious uses as an emergency facility and for just plain conversation."

RAVEN began with 54 units and now has 92 functioning. Members are gradually expanding operations into the heartland and up the coast. They are involved in many other facets of communication including the training of other native groups who come from as far away as James Bay.

They also possess two mobile vans which move around providing whatever service is necessary. The vans are equipped with VTR hardware, although Recalma admits their interest in and use of VTR has decreased in the last year or so.

Their job is clearly and obviously to create unity and strength among native people in Canada, and using the communications arsenal to do it, they have become the first native group in the country to recognize and learn to use the most powerful tool of the 20th century.

But what do you do if you're not in a position to apply for an FM licence or you're not a series of isolated native bands or hooked into an LPRT? Well, there's always the CBC. And that is just what two separate groups, one on the West Coast and one in the east are doing: selling free-lance items to local and regional CBC shows.

Neighbourhood Radio in Vancouver has also done some innovative work in the arts, something that hasn't been too common in community programming. It has produced a series, "Fairy Tales for Liberated Children," available for the cost of a cassette and postage. Teled in Halifax has formed a writers' co-operative; each individual sells separate items to the CBC and returns a certain portion of the revenue to Teled.

In Ottawa, Living Radio Vivante has eked out a precarious existence for the last three years, broadcasting over the two local cable television systems on audio only. The arrangement is not fully satisfactory to either Living Radio Vivante or the cable companies, but the group hopes to be able to apply for an FM licence in the future. This group is having difficulty in resolving its financial problems. The primary difficulty is an inability to obtain charitable organization status under the Income Tax Act. This means that people who subscribe or donate are not able to deduct that sum from their federal income tax. As a result, it is just that much harder to raise money. Three hours of its weekly programming is produced by three local ethnic groups; the remainder is devoted to community events.

The CBC's community programming section is run by Doug Ward, ex-public affairs producer for the Corporation. Ward has skilfully piloted his first LPRT project—Espanola, Ontario—through its first uneasy year of operation. Before establishing the station in Espanola, he and others had carefully worked out a set of loose general principles for the project. These included phasing out CBC personnel as soon as possible and establishing a citizens' committee to assume responsibility for the station's operation. Ward felt it important that the committee be truly representative of the town and its activities, not only of the local power structure such as the personnel director at the mill and the bank manager. They were also determined to affect as little as possible the programming decisions made.

Espanola is a northern mill town (40 miles north of Sudbury) with a population of 6000. CKSO Sudbury TV is available and so is CHNO Sudbury radio. It is very much a company town. Few native people live in town but there is a large population on nearby Manitoulin Island who use the town as their service centre. Native children attend high school in town.

A studio was set up in the local hotel and Pat Reilly arrived in town in November 1971. Reilly's job was to function as animator and general training resource person; but his most important duty was to withdraw from activities one by one as he sensed the community's willingness and ability to take over. The experiment was successful from the beginning.

By January the Espanola Community Radio Citizens' Committee had been formed from a representative cross-section of the community, the station was programming 20 hours a week, and the committee had \$1600 in the bank, raised through various community activities. Both Reilly and Ward sensed that the time for strategic withdrawal was at hand and on February 1st the citizens' committee took over full responsibility for running the station. The shows included an early morning music programme; an announcements and weather show, run by three shift workers from the mill; a rock show run by the kids after school; "Potlatch" for and by the Indian kids at the high school; and a Friday night hot-line show run by a local appliance repairman (and by all accounts the station's resident radical).

Although Espanola radio seemed well and truly launched, back in Toronto, Ward and other CBC people were examining the legal implications of CBC equipment and a licence granted to the CBC by the CRTC being, in effect, controlled by a group of citizens. It was decided that the logical solution was for the CBC to sign a contract with the committee. Broadly, the contract stipulates that the committee will conform to all the CRTC and Broadcasting Act regulations and CBC policies, maintain a studio to house the CBC equipment, participate in a joint annual evaluation; either party can cancel on 30 days' notice. It seems to work.

Since one of Ward's primary worries was that the situation would become a power base for the town's elite, he was extremely pleased last winter when a wild-cat strike at the mill emphasized the genuineness of the community concept. During the strike the radio was used by the union, management, and the ad hoc negotiating committee to present their points of view. The strike ended in two weeks and it is safe to assume CBLP Espanola played an important part.

Summer is always a difficult time for any community programming project; people go away, or garden, or lie around and drink beer. In any event they lack interest in spending long hours in a hot studio, so last year Espanola closed the station (though they were prepared to act in emergency situations). Programming started up in October with fresh plans for the new season.

Ward feels that one area of the Espanola experiment was somewhat disappointing. People tended to imitate AM formats and there was a general lack of information programming. This lack of comment and opinion on matters of local concern can be partially explained by the enormous amounts of time and energy which must be spent to gather background information, as well as the fact that there is little evident social dislocation in the town. Some of it might also be attributed to the company town syndrome. It seems reasonable to assume that most issues, especially environmental or planning ones, would end up at the local mill's door.

If community members wish to carry the experiment further and add more hardware, at the moment the plan is to have them raise the money for this themselves.

Ward is very emphatic about the deleterious effect of "giving groups lots of nice shiny hardware and thousands of government dollars. They play with the equipment and quarrel over the money. It's effective castration."

Still more alternatives

Groups working in community programming always face the major problem of getting their community together. As we've seen previously, this isn't a terribly large factor for certain groups like the ethnic people, but for those who are working for social change, to better neighbourhood conditions, or to help the poor stand up to welfare officials and landlords, it is a crucial one.

These people have found that programming over cable just doesn't work for them. They are too remote from their audience and they can't get the feedback they need to carry on.

One of the most common solutions to this problem is VTR playback. In a closed circuit situation the audience is selected and invited to a communal place, such as an auditorium or a church basement, to view a tape. The obvious and most frequent use of this method is in community organizing situations, and it flows originally from the concept of raising group consciousness through documentation and discussion which was initially explored in the Challenge for Change Fogo Island experiment. The theory is fairly simple: VTR can be used to show people that they have common problems and to overcome apathy and isolation. It also, if handled properly, generates self-confidence in the users. Although its original success was largely in rural areas, urban groups use it with considerable effectiveness. One technique is to work through neighbourhoods street by street, generating conversations about conditions (landlords, welfare etc.) and encouraging people to turn out and see what was said on the other street. The resulting sense of solidarity gives people a feeling of strength.

Arising logically out of this is "white paper" VTR. Videotaping encounters with welfare officers and landlords is an effective way of keeping the morale of activist citizens' groups high. The reverse process is also used to present to government the particular objectives and point of view of the group. In fact VTR is being used increasingly as an adjunct to oral or written presentations.

Another variant is alternate network VTR. This is used by common interest groups who are geographically separated. Tapes are made and are mailed back and forth among the different groups who use them for information or for training. The Women's Involvement Programme in Toronto was one of the first to use this method, and they have found it so successful for their purposes that they have abandoned programming on cable television completely.

Media access groups

I've left the best until last. Or at least I've left the most complex until last—media access groups are nothing if not complex.

The evolution of these groups is one of the fascinating aspects of the explosion in citizens' communications. They are, of course, a largely urban phenomenon. The pattern of formation doesn't vary too greatly with the individual city; people discover there are several groups all doing the same things: scrounging for equipment and money. It becomes logical to combine under one umbrella to save energy and resources.

The principle behind these groups is their commitment to teaching other citizens' groups how to use the media. They have little or no interest in originating programming; they see themselves as simply one more tool for community groups to use. Thus they provide training, hardware, advice, support, aid in identifying issues and choosing a medium.

Metro Media in Vancouver illustrates this function, so let's examine it in some depth. The formation of media-oriented groups is always loose. People criss-cross between various satellite groups and it is sometimes difficult to pin-point membership. In 1971 in Vancouver there were two media source groups operating: Inter Media, an artists' co-op experimenting with new communications techniques, and Inner City Services Project, which had been using Challenge for Change equipment in social change situations. In May 1971 the two groups merged to form Metro Media Association of Greater Vancouver, largely to aid them both in handling the heavy demands citizens' groups were making for equipment, training, and advice.

Structurally, Metro Media is a non-profit society run by a board of directors elected annually at a general meeting. Anyone can become a member. Under this broad umbrella the individual groups function independently, although all "belong" to Metro Media.

Their purpose was to provide information to groups about all the media resources available to them, to assist them in choosing a medium, and training them in its use. Obviously, their activities ranged through the spectrum of all community projects: language training for immigrants, white paper presentations to government by senior citizens, internal VTR use by various groups, radio use, and community newspapers.

Although they started with a commitment to decentralization and the establishment of resource people throughout Vancouver, they have since abandoned this facet of the operation. "We found that we raised expectations among neighbourhood people and then we couldn't fulfill them due to the chronic lack of equipment and money," says spokesman Bill Nemtin. "We quit because we didn't like the feeling we were ripping people off.... At the moment we have received no funding since 31 May 1973 and have had to reduce our programming to half an hour a week. However, we are picking up some contracts such as a recent one to do some work for the Children's Aid Society. We are

happier working this way. The only question is: can we stay alive financially?"

And that is the question, not only for Metro Media, but for Metro Community Media (Toronto), Teled (Halifax), and smaller versions in smaller cities. Functioning as umbrella groups means they work through and with the various community groups rather than within the actual neighbourhood itself. They provide, in effect, a service for the various neighbourhood groups—one more tool for them to use. But the problem lies in the fact that most community groups are themselves too impoverished to purchase this service at anything near cost, and since the media access groups seldom function on the one-to-one neighbourhood level, they cannot generate financial support directly from the community. However, their ethic demands that any community project which requests assistance or instruction should receive it, regardless of ability to pay. This somewhat circular situation results in media access groups being far more dependent than other citizens' communications groups on established bureaucratic institutions for support.

The attempts being initiated across the country by various groups to do contract work for those established social services which can afford to pay, and who have up to now tended to contract with commercial firms for this type of work, may result eventually in their acquiring a stable financial base from which they can continue their work with the poorer and less established groups, pursuing citizens' participation and social change.

Although the techniques and emphases of community programming have changed frequently, the main focus has not. The participation of citizens, not only in the media but in all facets of their environment and the decisions that effect it, is gradually evolving from an exotic notion to an established practice. Across the country citizens are involved in a plethora of activities: neighbourhood groups are tackling city hall for their right to have a say in the planning of their communities; native people are re-examining treaties, looking at welfare and other social problems, and questioning the government's right to proceed on various projects without consulting them; medical clinics are battling for health care; existing social services and policies are being questioned and examined; unfair landlords are being confronted—the list goes on and on.

Slowly and surely the participation concept which was initially thought of as "radical" and strictly the province of "the kids" has become more and more a part of the average citizen's life. He may not participate himself, but he accepts that others do and in fact, expects them to.

And, not to end on a gloomy note: although the above list includes a lot of "tackling" and "battling" (after all, there is a lot going on), there are many fine, creative, and just plain friendly things happening. People who are participating in citizens' activities are made more aware of individual potential, largely because incredible

ingenuity is needed to keep most groups functioning—their only resource is themselves. This creates a climate of recognition of talents and abilities in which people blossom. To say that in some ways the citizens'

communication movement in Canada is this flowering would be to use a pretty sentimental metaphor. So I won't. But you get the idea.

Access by community groups

Vianne Lyman and Gail Martin

A look at “community groups”

First of all, some discussion of a definition of “community” or “group” in communications terms can help to free us from geographical hangups. Everyone has acknowledged that in an urban area today, you cannot draw a line around a cluster of houses in a given area and term it a community. Anyone who lives in a modern city knows he probably has less to communicate to the people next door than to forty other people he might know who are scattered across the metropolitan area. The geographical community or neighbourhood to which he belongs physically, because of where he rents or owns his house, does not function as his community. Except for specific concerns of ratepayers—voting time, tax levy, developmental decisions—the community where his house is, is probably not the community in which he lives.

Community for any of us in modern urban society is an amorphous, fluid thing. It may be a community of work associates for the greater part of the day. Once a week or so we join a community of scuba divers or skiers or antique car owners, or curlers, hockey enthusiasts, or stamp collectors. Or we may belong at various times to groups of shoppers, taxpayers, automobile drivers, commuters, fathers, mothers, *Financial Post* readers, or “Hourglass” watchers. These are groups to which we have been trained by background, to which we have attached ourselves by interest, and which we sustain by necessity, habit, or choice.

Perhaps the clearest example of how independent communities can be of geographical location is a look at the RAVEN (Radio and Audio Visual Education Network) system. This is a system of two-way radio and bicycled videotape, exclusively for the use of the native people. The Indian people have a clear idea of a community based on heritage, upbringing, and environment. Whatever the geographical dispersion or even the differences between the various bands and tribes, they remain clearly set off as a group distinct from the rest of us. Modern communications technology can help these people with their special needs to bridge the gaps of geographical distance and to rediscover and reinforce the heritage, the community of “communications” that binds them together. In 1970, we had discussed the RAVEN idea and we spoke of something relevant to our concerns here, the concept of “neighbourhoods of the air.” Perhaps a section of that description is worth quoting, opening as it does the way to discussion of the nature of wired communities in a modern metropolitan environment:

Advances in communications systems, notably cable television, will enable individual regions and neighbourhoods to put television channels to their own special uses. We will have the potential to

form, more efficiently than RAVEN can do at present, what we may in time refer to as “network neighbourhoods.” We can use communications technology, not just for the needs of commerce and the necessities of living, but for the more intangible needs of sharing interests and opinions, increasing individual political effectiveness, and stemming loneliness and the fear born of ignorance and isolation.

It has been repeatedly observed that people gather in cities of at least a certain size for the multiplicity of opportunities for contacts, job promotion and selection, and for entertainment and cultural activities that an urban centre can provide. On the other hand, the resultant alienation, isolation, and loneliness that can be the lot of the city-dweller has often been traced to the largeness and impersonality associated with the North American and European city. The remedy tried by community development workers and neighbourhood block associations is to form, within the larger city, units small enough for people to relate to one another and for the individual to feel his contribution is of some value. Perhaps this idea of neighbourhood or community units need not be confined to a geographical area alone. It is possible that neighbourhood may come to mean neighbourhood of interest or neighbourhood of cultural background or neighbourhood of common endeavour.

It seems fairly certain, for example, that the Indian people of coastal British Columbia will not soon live in houses side by side on the same street in a given area of an urban centre. The overall economic pressures and the cultural renewal that is taking place within the Indian community suggest that they may for some years continue to live as they are, scattered among inlets and on nearly inaccessible islands. Nevertheless, through RAVEN, they can form a functional sub-system within the larger society. It is to the preservation of these sub-systems and to the search for means of maintaining their viability that we have addressed our efforts and our research.¹

A picture of people with like interests scattered along a coastline separated by mountains and geographical distance can give us some help in conceptualizing the communications network task to be performed in metropolitan areas. What we have are groups of individuals separated from one another by geographical distance. These people, however, sharing similar social backgrounds or professional interests, adapt common language and a common way of seeing reality, so that they become members of the same “epistemic community.”²

Given the complexity of any man's "community" in social terms, it is not hard to articulate the causes for the difficulty of community programming in achieving its promise, and it becomes somewhat easier to visualize where the solutions may be sought. We divide our discussion into two categories: social and socio-technical.

Community media groups in urban areas across Canada can easily be seen to have come from, and indeed to have generated, their own epistemic community. Granting exceptions, it is not unfair to categorize most of them as politically leftist in orientation. Their members are uncommitted to the work ethic, not motivated by needs or gain and status as they see them defined by the North American bourgeoisie or middle class. Their orientation brings with it a set of preconceptions about what media should do and be in society, which groups they should cater to, and to what aspects of social change they should contribute.

Given the multiplicity of epistemic communities in modern urban society, it is not hard to see how limited a segment of the population the community media group is likely to reach or to represent. Furthermore, it has been well observed how difficult it is to break out of one's own epistemic community to make contact with members of others. This is the classic difficulty experienced by psychiatrists dealing with blue-collar patients, by "experts" dealing with laymen, etc. It almost certainly plays a part in the difficulty experienced by professional and voluntary groups and by cable system operators in dealing with media groups.

There is also the problem of the "fit" or lack thereof between the needs of groups in urban areas as we have conceptualized them and the available technology. We say "available" in the sense of available to the citizen. More appropriate technologies may exist but be unavailable to him; or the available ones could, but are not, being used in ways appropriate to his needs. The problems here still involve habits, attitudes, and prejudices of human beings or groups of human beings, but in this context, we deal only with those attitudes directly related to using communications technology. Here we get into questions of "professionalism" in product and procedure, programming syndromes, and the TV set as "goggle box."

Social factors

To expand on our analysis of the meaning of group, let's look at what "group" most often means in practical terms relative to community programming.

SERVICE/INTEREST GROUPS

There are organizations that exist for reasons other than media/information purposes, be it community service, common interests, or community action. This category includes organizations that are probably quite familiar in most communities, such as the Chamber of Commerce, homeowners' associations, Rotary Club, sport and recreation clubs, and so on. The purpose of

these organizations is not primarily serving access needs, although to varying degrees this is an important part of what they do.

Community service/interest organizations traditionally have been concerned with access to media for purposes of publicity, or in general for raising public awareness of their activities. The action-oriented organizations integrate information processes more directly into their activities and there is a strong relationship between effective group action and information. For example, the Sea Island Community and Ratepayers' Association in Richmond, BC, became involved in protesting a proposed airport expansion that was planned for their area. Their protests led to a series of hearings and meetings that involved different levels of government.

Through these meetings it became clear to them that it was important to gain access to the Ministry of Transport materials containing the data that the Ministry of Transport had used as a base for their plans for the expansion. When it became clear that these materials were not forthcoming, legal action at the federal court level was undertaken. The case was eventually withdrawn, but it was established that the Ministry of Transport did not have a comprehensive plan based on thorough research, especially in regard to environmental effects. The result was that an airport planning committee was established involving tri-level government staff and local citizens, to undertake the necessary research and information gathering for making decisions on expansion.

MEDIA/INFORMATION GROUPS

There are organizations whose primary expressed function is that of providing information or facilitating access to local media. Some brief descriptions of types of organizations in BC will help to illustrate the scope of activities of such groups.

The form that these associations take depends largely on whether the company has a programmer and studio set-up. Thus we find in smaller cities or towns, where there is no programmer, groups which are affiliated with the local channel and responsible for all the local programming, but with outside funding.³

We visited two towns in BC with groups of this type, and they operate quite differently, stating different views of access. This is a situation, bear in mind, where these groups are "accessing" the local cable channel exclusively, and access for others in the community passes through them.

The Alberni Community Television Association (in Port Alberni) began through a committee formed by a local school teacher in June 1971. They started local programming on a volunteer basis in November 1971, and got an LIP grant in February 1972. The group then reorganized with some dropping out. In effect the LIP group grew out of the looser community group, and is now known as Alberni TV. ATV has an arrangement with the cable television company to provide the local

programming, for which the company has furnished them with equipment. The LIP grant paid for a staff of nine, but they use some volunteer help, mostly students. They define access quantitatively: access is not just an open channel, it must be exercised. In this way, the viewers see that something is always on, and it gives them confidence in local programming. Thus, ATV programmes 16 hours a day, from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm. This is accomplished by rotating programming in three blocks: the morning block on day one is repeated in the afternoon on day two, in the evening on day three; the afternoon block on day one is repeated on the evening of day two, and so on. There are three news slots each day that are used only that day. This is a very ambitious schedule, and to fill it they use mostly in-studio interviews supplemented by clips done outside the studio with a portapak. There are about 21 programmes a week, 7 to 8 of which are done by volunteers from the community (again, mostly students). In a two-month period about 300 people from the community were involved in interviews. In this sense, they are reaching a great number of people in the community, and community and interest groups seemed fairly well represented. The organizer of ATV has been very energetic in directing the community programming and overseeing the schedule. He stated, realistically we thought, "my presence is a bar for some," and in fact the channel is probably regarded as his channel more than the community channel.

In Duncan, BC, the Cowichan Community Television Association produces local programming, under the leadership of a local teacher and funded by a LIP grant, with their studio in the local high school. They have a large (14) full-time paid staff. They do not aim for community involvement in producing programmes; theirs is a community *on* television operation rather than community *in* television. As one member put it, "we don't talk about access any more, we talk about community programming." They concentrate on quality programming covering all points of view in their area. They feel wide coverage involves the whole community, brings them into contact with many, and in turn stimulates interest in watching community programming.

Access, then, is not their concern, nor is quantity of programming; what is of major concern are quality programmes that reflect the many sides of the community. CCTV programmes only two nights a week, running their tapes consecutively rather than by rigid schedule.

Both of these community media groups are in a situation where they control use of the local channel, and their programming operation, more than offering an access situation for the community, offers a coverage one. To oversimplify, in Port Alberni that coverage aims at quantity; in Duncan, at quality.

Some areas do not yet have community programming, but groups have formed to explore the possibilities, and try to determine what uses the community should make, of the local channel. The West Kootenay Cablevision Society was organized in the summer of 1973 with members from the towns of Trail, Nelson, and Castlegar. This society is "dedicated to helping people gain

access to local cablevision facilities in order to present the various viewpoints which are available for presentation in the local community. The existence of the society is dependent upon its basis as a community organization with active participation of all elements of the local community represented."⁴ Their first priority has been to come together on their common goals, to form a strong, widely based organization, then search for funding which will enable them to start producing programmes.

The municipality of Prince George, in anticipation of a cable licence soon to be granted for their area, formed a special study committee to make recommendations for consideration in granting the licence. Their report⁵ stresses the importance of future uses of cable with extended channel capacity. In this way they drew attention to information and public service uses of future channels, rather than focusing on one-channel community programming exclusively. They also recommended a committee to advise on community programming.

In larger cities like Vancouver, which have cable studios and hired community programmers, there are often a number of media groups who act as a liaison between the community and the cable company. These groups, using portable equipment, may produce tapes themselves or assist and animate others in the community to produce their own tapes to show on the local channel.

For some, these groups have raised awareness of local programming, but have had to deal with the multiple tasks of keeping themselves together, serving community needs, and building cooperative relations with the local channel. Thus exercising the right to access in community programming has been demanding and it is not surprising that their activities have been a mix of uneven accomplishments. These urban groups differ from the groups in smaller towns we described in that they emphasize community production of tapes. They do not have to concern themselves with filling the schedule, although they are restricted to the programming format of the cable company.

Community television is not the only outlet with which media/information groups concern themselves. Some groups are print oriented, such as the Discovery Passage Communications Project, a community group on Quadra Island, BC which publishes the *Discovery Passage*, their community newspaper. This project is a group of Quadra residents who joined together in the spring of 1972 to "find some practical expression of their concern for the quality of life on the island." The newspaper was to "provide a form of communication more reliable than word of mouth at a time when the island's future direction is at stake...to try to separate fact from gossip so that residents will know more clearly what is happening here."⁶ They began as an OFY project in 1972, got a LIP grant in February 1973, and now put out a twelve-page tabloid every two weeks. They estimate their readership at 1500 to 1700, and when the LIP money was to run out at the end of November (1973), they expected to be self-sufficient. The project also established an information centre

which contains their brochure urging conservation of Quadra island's environment, both physical and social.

In Vancouver, the City Information Works, which is jointly sponsored by the city's Social Planning Department and a LIP grant, publishes *Connection*, a monthly newsletter which attempts to serve as an information/idea exchange for information centres and resources in the Vancouver area. The City Information Works also puts out the *Urban Reader*. Each issue focuses on a specific urban problem such as housing, pollution, or day care, and presents abstracts of articles and books. It makes good use of graphics, photography, and layout, so that the magazine, although small, is of high quality.

Local radio access in the past has meant getting a station to "plug" group activities or events, or calling in to hot-line shows. In addition some groups have managed to produce tapes for airing on the CBC.

PROBLEMS AND CONFLICTS

In some areas community programming attempted to flourish in a situation of conflict between the goals of media groups and interest/service group needs. The media groups, on the one hand, were video-oriented people, very often funded on short-term government grants. They saw the community channel as a means to counteract the mass approach of commercial broadcasting. One local group leader put it this way: "We saw our role as performing the proper function of media...to be a radical organizing force...informing and exposing, and getting the public to challenge political decisions and planning." This partially defines his epistemic community and highlights further sources of conflict. These were long-term goals that required, among other things, changing public attitudes to television, and short-term funded groups were not equipped for long-term sustained efforts to educate or arouse the public. On the other hand the community service group's goals were immediate, short-range ones. Often they could be met by the community channel. They reported that often all they wanted was simply a tape about a project or work they were involved in. They could not understand why media groups would contact them, do some videotaping, then disappear, never again to be heard from, with no discernible results from the contact.

Another problem which arose was the lack of wide representation, in which a particular media group controlled or dominated access to local media. In some cases it simply meant the group became a "new establishment," in many ways as restrictive as the commercial media establishment. A sense of propriety toward the local channel developed in some groups; others played more of a gatekeeper's role. The reasons varied. While questions of individual personality cannot be discounted in specific cases, the universal and possibly insurmountable problem of non-communicating epistemic communities offers a clearer understanding of what took place.

However, we must not underestimate the frustrating problems of lack of funds, scarce equipment, community apathy, and uncommitted cable television companies that media groups took on in order to produce local programming. Unfortunately, they tended to be pushed into the priorities of a programmer filling a schedule. Some did this because of their own preferences, some because they knew more about television than about community animation and how to coordinate community groups to make use of the channel.

There were conflicts between media groups which further undermined balanced community programming. This bickering diverted energies and resources, and arose in part from the fact that they were often competing for scarce short-term funds. A more basic reason however was that some media groups became involved in serving themselves, in repeating the rhetoric of access without the service to community priorities it demanded. Competitive bickering resulted from efforts to preserve or build an image, and the perception that other media groups might threaten or somehow detract from this image.

If there is a formula for avoiding these conflict situations, we found it in groups which oriented themselves to a long-range goal—be it community development, counteracting mass media, demystifying television—but concerned themselves with the specific tasks of exploiting cable access to bring tangible results for a community or public they were serving. In this process the direction as to priorities or specific needs came from the community group, and the media group's role was to help them service these needs. Characteristically, such media groups had good internal unity, and their operation was less geared around funding schemes. This does not mean that funding wasn't a problem, but funding problems didn't mask other problems; nor did problems create unmanageable confusion as they were apt to do in groups which spent their energy in conflict with their community or each other.

Socio-technical factors

Media access groups have attempted to provide local input to compete with mass non-local media; they have attempted in some cases to involve individuals and groups in media production as a means of demystifying media processes and providing a communication process, which some feel facilitates better solutions to community issues.

The nature of the preoccupation with access has created problems, since access, if it is to mean anything at all, must be exercised. Not discounting some areas and instances, access to community channels has not been utilized by the public. When we began our research, we studied the various problems of funding, staff, leadership, etc., to search out the reasons for this. The simple fact of the matter is that most people in a community don't want to produce television. It does not offer them the kind of feedback, the participation, the interaction, that fills their needs.

These problems are related to the unfortunate identification with the commercial programming format. There is the temptation for the community programmer to build a schedule and fill it with attempts to emulate "professional" broadcast programmes (which rarely succeed anyway). There is the intimidation of the community members which occurs in front of a camera. They expect they must imitate the broadcast professionals, or as viewers, they expect that TV must passively entertain them. This takes away from an exploration of alternative programming or services which would supplement existing programming and fill the gaps left by communications services, rather than compete with them. We are talking of television offering community programming which would cater to the randomness and multiplicity of groups or groupings within the community, television which would offer information services geared to needs within the community and knowledge about other information systems that exist.

This kind of programming or service requires fitting media and information systems to group needs in a way that best serves them. Shifting away from conventional programming means considering both process and content. In a situation where a community issue becomes "hot," it means having a flexible format in which group meetings or debates could be aired live over the community channel at the time they are taking place, and focussing public interest on them. It means the possibility of not having a rigid schedule, or one that is devoted entirely to local community programming. Community producers could still allocate time for interested groups to use the channel, and could still produce their own programmes. It means groups could take into consideration which medium serves their goals or needs best. If their message is not visual and of interest to an audience that is at home working during the day, then perhaps they would be best reached by radio. (For further development of this, see "Community radio programming facilities," below.) Many people need and prefer personal contact; information services could keep lists of people to contact who "know." Information could be supplied by cable, radio, and newspapers.

In many cases, video has been a kind of overkill in terms of the communications task that had to be done. Using television to communicate certain kinds of community information is something akin to using a cannon to kill a fly: it may do the job but with great noise, trouble, and attendant accidental damage. Most people involved in the experience could be forgiven for returning to the flyswatter next time.

Apart from communications problems between groups, a formidable technical obstacle impedes those who would promote the use of cable television systems for community programming. This is, of course, due to the layout of cable systems such that the territory covered by a community programming service does not necessarily coincide even with the political boundaries of the area and ironically enough, the geographically relevant issues and information have been those that have

received greatest attention and perhaps marked the greatest successes of community programming—planning problems, municipal council meetings, local suburban elections. Yet it is here that the programmers battled the fiercest technical odds, with the city halls residing in different cable systems from their constituencies.

It has been proposed in some places that every cable system should provide the capability for production origination at each elementary school. This would coincide with the smallest geographical unit with common concerns. If each such school district could have access to a closed circuit TV system capable of operating sometimes independently of all the others, sometimes linked to all the others, we would have, it is agreed, a technical system flexible enough to promote the development of a more sophisticated form of community programming.

In the past, one-way communication and information dominated our use of, and perceptions of, the role of media in our lives. But more recently we have developed the means of answering back, such as hot lines and cable television programmes, which have allowed people to air their views. Perhaps this kind of communication with the public at large is all that is needed, or perhaps direct feedback to the planning board, school board, or regional and provincial departments is also desirable. It certainly would be technically possible if planning included research into desirable alternative communications patterning.

Information centres

Some effort to meet the general class of information needs is being made by community information centres, springing up in large numbers across the continent. A year ago a local information centre volunteer observed that so many information centres were opening that soon there would have to be an information centre about information centres. Her prophecy was nearly correct in that one main task of the new Community Information Centre in Vancouver is coordinating information from and about other centres. The CIC collects and updates information, and feeds it back to the neighbourhood information centres on a monthly basis to keep information current. (This division of information service into centralized general centres and local partisan centres is discussed more fully in *Issues for Citizen Information Services*, the report of a National Consultation on Community Information and Referral Services, by the Canadian Council on Social Development, Ottawa.) There are many factors involved in developing information centres themselves, but with respect to communication service, the division emphasizes the need for ordering information and assisting people to know what it is they have to know and providing feedback channels so that the communication process is participatory rather than one-way.

The localized, more partisan neighbourhood information centres serve the feedback function by recording needs expressed in their incoming calls. A significant

number of requests led to establishing services or programmes such as housing registries, legal aid clinics, and day-care facilities. In such cases these centres produced results that media groups failed to parallel. However, this is a multi-purpose approach involving social service agencies and "outside" personnel who need a base to reach their publics.⁷

Evidence of information service gaps was provided in a study we completed in a local suburban area serviced with community cable programming, several information centres, and three local papers, in addition to the standard mass media. We conducted an informal survey looking at one widely used channel of communication, the telephone, and a study of the types of calls received at several public institutions, e.g. the municipal halls and libraries.

All incoming calls were tallied and categorized. Of importance here were those calls which we classified as general information requests. This category included a wide range of requests for local facts, phone numbers, directions, rentals, and many individual and discrete requests such as how to get rid of blackberry bushes or how to handle a difficult divorce case.

Predictably, the library received a high percentage (21%) of general information requests, often linked to a book source, e.g. "do you have any books on how I can build a retaining wall?"

The two municipal halls in the area received not only general information requests but calls which were not specific to municipal hall business, be it enquiries about outside agencies such as the Health Unit or questions involving another level of government, or another area in the province.

Combined requests for outside and general information totalled 13% of incoming calls in one municipal hall, and 25% in the other. These figures suggest that in seeking needed information people call well-known public institutions whose purpose is not specifically an information-giving one, even though specific information media and agencies are operating in their areas.

But in bringing together information services and the media that might expedite the task, a number of obstacles are encountered. Let us speculate, for example, that some form of facsimile transmission to the home via the TV set might greatly enhance the effectiveness of an information service. Presumably a telephone enquirer could be directed, for several kinds of information, to consult a channel on his TV screen for a display answer.

Several experimental efforts using this approach are underway, and it seems that lack of imagination on the part of both programmers and users is more of an obstacle than economic or technical problems. We are so conditioned to the TV set as a purveyor of passive entertainment exclusively that we cannot quite make the psychological leap required to perceive the TV set also as a potential information machine. This limited perception may influence acceptance by the public of

such new services, if offered. And conditioned perceptions about the nature of television and programming have certainly guided, or restricted if you prefer, community explorations with the media so far.

At present, under limited mass media conditions, the proportion of people sharing one notable programming event is extraordinarily high (the Bobby Riggs - Billie Jean King tennis match springs to mind). Under conditions of much wider choice—of the audience fragmentation we are told to fear—there will be fewer of such widely shared experiences, but if the media respond to the potential we will share perhaps more often with more people of like mind. This is the promised route of multiplicity that can free us from programming geared to the lowest common denominator. It is also the condition under which community programming is most likely to become effective. No longer will community production keep company only with the slick, professional output of the great mass networks. It will be more at home among an array of information and entertainment channels, providing a variety of resources for the chess player or for the home-building do-it-yourselfer. Perhaps the day of the TV as goggle box will pass as we free ourselves from the hypnotic hold of the Giant American Three.

Whether all this comes to pass depends a great deal, of course, on how much imagination and effort is put into production and programming—however broadly defined—on the new channels. It is nevertheless in the context of this near future that it is easiest to see the unfairness of the battle for community attention in which community programming finds itself at this stage.

Conclusion

Why has it seemed important to us to speak in terms of the communications needs of groups? Traditionally, finding out what the public needs has involved methods with inherent flaws in the point of view that frames the methods. Most obvious is the concept of "a public." Critics for some time have attacked the mass-mind outlook of broadcasting, and this criticism applies at the community level as well. The review of community groups shows briefly that there are many "publics" or epistemic communities, and thus the exploration of needs should take this into account. This has not always happened. One popular approach has been to conduct a poll, ask people what they need, and gear services to the top ten. This hierarchical approach is the traditional mass overview and has left out groups of individuals whose priorities are different. The dissatisfaction that this procedure generated has been increasingly expressed, and there is now a growing recognition that services must be geared to publics rather than a public. These publics can be catered to perhaps by the multiplication of channels available from communications, provided that the uses to which the newer ones are put are not simply repetitive of the old ones.

Recognition of the many kinds of groups and groupings as a reflection of public complexity is one thing; the critical question is, what role do these groups play in

relation to information needs and access? Information is vital in our society. But information is not all that hard to come by. In fact it is practically impossible to avoid being bombarded with it. What we need is increased competence in dealing with it, requiring agents to order the information and to provide knowledge of how to find needed information.

Two main groups have sprung up in our society in the last decade which attempt to deal with increasing the

flow of information to and from the public. These two groups—the media organizations and the information centres—approach problems of public information from entirely different perspectives. They are, however, dealing with separate aspects of, and approaching from different directions, the same large problem of our era: public information access. Out of a rapprochement between media groups and information centres may come some imaginative alternative uses for our new communications capabilities.

Footnotes

1. Patricia M. Hindley, "Neighbourhoods of the Air," paper presented at the International Communication Association Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, April 1972.

2. B. Holzner, *Reality Construction in Society*. Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman 1968, p. 69.

3. Funding of such projects in the past came from many sources, notably the Secretary of State's LIP (Local Initiatives Programme) and OFY (Opportunities for Youth) grants which were short-term funding programmes designed to meet general social needs. The tentative nature of such programmes is illustrated by the fact that Port Alberni has, since this article was researched, ceased operating as described here (editor's note).

4. West Kootenay Cablevision Society Constitution, August 1973.

5. "Report of the Special Study Committee on Cable Television," City of Prince George, June 1973.

6. *Discovery Passage*, no. 1, 23 June 1972.

7. Terry Pyper, "Neighbourhood Information Centres, A Re-examination of their Relationship with the Social Service Sector," *Community Change*, vol. 1, no. 1, January 1973.

Media as mirror

Colin Low

The best illustration of media as a community mirror that I know of is an event that occurred in Newfoundland in 1970. A Memorial University community development man from St. John's was asked to help organize an improvement committee in a small outport community. A meeting was called and the community development man arrived with his portable video tape recorder. There were only a few people at the meeting, and a considerable number of those had fortified themselves against the awful tedium of public debate with a tot or two of rum. As usual only two or three people did most of the talking. Outport people are often very modest and extremely polite—and often have an exaggerated respect for city education, a psychological handicap that has been developed by generations of exposure to the myth that education and wisdom go hand in hand.

The meeting progressed by leaps and bounds and it did not seem unusual that the most vocal members of the group should end up the executive of the brand new improvement committee—until the videotape of the proceedings was played back. The meeting sobered appreciably, there was no further debate, and the evening ended thoughtfully.

The next day the community development man got a telephone call from a representative of the previous evening's gathering. There was a fairly unanimous decision that the election of the executive should be done over again.

Another meeting was called, and this time the video tape recorder wasn't even turned on. There were double the number of people there and while no members of the executive improvement committee were relieved of their so recently elected positions, additional members were added to shore it up.

Such stories reinforce my conviction that the public process requires time, reconsideration, and a method of reflecting or playing back the true events to the group. Individual memory is fallible and group memory is sometimes downright dangerous because it consists of multiple viewpoints, although individually we often have the illusion that the group shares the same objective image we hold as individuals.

We also sometimes need to see, as individuals, that we do not express our own thoughts adequately to a group. As we talk verbally we also talk to ourselves in our own heads. We hear two voices, the interior voice and the exterior voice, and we get them confused. We have the illusion of having given a complete explanation of our thesis when in reality we have projected only half or less than half of what we have projected to ourselves.

Only with playback of a real image of our performance do we realize the inadequacy of our image projection.

Audiences and consensus

What about an audience: what do they record of what is projected to them, through the filters of their own vanities and prejudice, through their preference of one style as opposed to another style?

I was once asked to talk about media and community to a group of journalists and editorial writers. I had been burned badly several months earlier by a group of doctors who were not ready for my particular earnest style of delivery. Jaded, bored, and slightly tipsy, this particular group would have been kinder if they had hurled the remnants of their meal at me a quarter of the way through my dissertation. And here I was again, not having learned my lesson.

When I arrived at the club drinks had already been served and the group of forty journalists were in no mood to hear about obscure poverty-ridden communities and their communication problems.

In this case I had brought along video equipment to demonstrate my point. I suggested to the gathering that we play a parlour game since the mood was lively. Since we had the magic of the media at our disposal we could talk to anyone on the planet instantaneously. I suggested the group might find it fun to select a single individual to whom they would like to speak and then select a question they would like to put to this august or humble personality. The group unanimously agreed to record the proceedings on video tape and I bowed out from further participation in the discussion.

Immediately someone rose and suggested that Mao Tse Tung would be a worthy recipient of the group's important question. From then on what followed would make the confusion at the foot of the tower of Babel seem like a Sunday school picnic. Some people became serious, even angrily serious. No chairman was elected, no parliamentary rules adopted. After three quarters of an hour which yielded no progress toward consensus whatsoever, I suggested we play back the video tape.

All the usual manifestations of human group uncertainty appeared. These people, despite unusual education, years in the communication business, knowledge of meeting procedure, were just as much at sea as some of the outport people in Newfoundland, native people on reservations, or unemployed coal miners. You might say that the question or situation was not real. People understood that it was only a charade, a parlour game, and consequently would not address themselves to it with the same seriousness as they would to a question affecting their mutual physical or social welfare. However, my ruse had worked. I was able to get these people to listen to the communication problems of others by reflecting the disparity between the group

illusion of professionalism in communication with the reality of performance.

An individual on his own and the same individual within a group are two different creatures. Group responses and reactions are very unpredictable because of this. I am not interested in techniques of group manipulation; that is a dead-end street of social change. But methods of reinforcing individual confidence and group confidence in creative problem-solving is one of the most important areas for research and experimentation in media.

The relationship between individual morale and group morale has always fascinated me, perhaps because I was born in a small farming community in southern Alberta and grew up where communication was easier to observe. The area was settled by Mormons in the latter part of the last century. My family were members of that pioneer group. In our area there were quite a number of village communities more or less Mormon in composition. In retrospect and in relation to certain communities I have lived in subsequently, despite the Depression of the thirties, they were amazingly healthy communities, healthy in social, psychological terms. I think that was true because the Mormon faith is based upon a high degree of participation and verbal communication. The leaders are in effect lay ministers and practically everyone is expected to participate in meetings, recreational activities, sports and social functions and work projects from the time they can speak. Whether one agrees with the doctrinal elements of such religious communities, one thing is certain, the dividing line between personal awareness and group awareness is very tenuous. One cannot maintain a high degree of personal aloofness and expect to live in a healthy community. Space, yes—that seems essential to both individual and community mental health—but one must be prepared to participate and risk the exposure that participation necessitates. This is the basis, I believe, for self-awareness.

But what of situations outside such traditions? Urban situations with their so-called privacy and non-involvement are sometimes considered attractive. But alienation is not far away. The problem is scale. I believe that cities will not survive their own growth, but they have a powerful magnetic attraction at this point in history for many reasons. But the balance between the growing frantic mania of contemporary city life and the loneliness and cultural starvation of small communities, impoverished in many cases by the city, will not be resolved for years if ever. We can expect to live between two extremes and we must try to do so.

One would expect media to bridge the two extremes, to foster the best of both worlds. I do not believe we have begun to understand media in human terms, its creative potential and its malevolent influence.

Recently I learned of the work of the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre which undertakes educational work with spastic children. Some of these children are so handicapped they are unable to speak; the movement of their limbs is extremely limited. Because these

children often have a high degree of intelligence their frustration is intense. They are communicated *to* all the time but they can't send messages. They cannot communicate except by emotional outburst. These children are taught a symbolic language, a system of 480 symbols on a board that they can point to. They can carry on conversations with their teachers or with each other. The system is subtle enough to allow the children to make jokes. The personality transformation is remarkable. They move from a one-way communication system in which they are trapped on the receiving end to a two-way system in which they are also senders.

When we view society as a whole we can identify many groups that are trapped within a one-way system. They get talked to all the time. Communication *within* the group may be adequate but within a larger community they are mute. We could identify the obvious groups—the villages of Labrador or the Arctic, the Indian reservations, the city ghettos—but there are many communities which exist with similar communication handicaps.

Communication skills

In 1968 the Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington, having heard of the Challenge for Change programme, an experiment in the use of film as a catalyst in community development, invited Julian Biggs of the National Film Board and myself to direct a project of a similar kind in conjunction with one of their community action agencies in the San Joaquin Valley in California. Farmersville is not a remote, isolated community. It is a small town in the fruit-growing country several miles from Visalia. In the thirties Farmersville was a tent town made up of newcomers from Oklahoma and Arkansas. Steinbeck in *Grapes of Wrath* wrote about Linnel Camp, which is three miles from Farmersville. In the forties it had small houses and shacks. In the fifties it had incorporated and become a town. In the late sixties there was a strong movement to disincorporate because of the resistance to taxes and services that the city had introduced.

The original settlers from the thirties had become the blue collar workers—the farm foremen, the truck drivers, the machinery operators. A comparatively new group of Mexican Americans made up the new field labour force. Down the road from Farmersville there is a small town which boasts fourteen millionaires. They are the owners of the big fruit ranches. Farmersville, although its high school students are bussed to that town for school, remains a labourers' town.

What was hoped for in the experiment we undertook? Again there was the possibility that local improvement of communication could make possible an improved community development process. Here there was no appointed community development worker and the OEO agency of the area had until then little success with any of their projects in the town. But the local agency had a dedicated, hard-working staff which

seemed to guarantee a future for a communication project and for community development.

We moved into a house in the area. There were ten of us in the team. In this case we had a double team so that we could work with a broader cross-section of the community simultaneously. We had decided to do the editing at the same time as the shooting, and had an editing room installed on the main street next to the barber shop. We played back films every week in the local Veterans Hall. We wanted our activities to be as open as possible. There were no strikes in the area, no angry demonstrations. The town was ostensibly peaceful. The gap of communications was essentially cultural, divided along racial lines.

Most of the churches in the white or Anglo part of town were Pentecostal. There was a strong fundamentalist faith in most of the Anglo population. Of course the Mexican Americans with their lively music, enthusiasm for gambling, and strong Catholic faith represented an extremely different culture. While townspeople hastened to tell us there was no prejudice in the town or any trouble, one of the communication gaps was fairly obvious. But there were others: the fear of the small ranchers in relation to the large ranchers, the fear of the large ranchers in relation to corporation ranches, the fear of the ranch owners in relation to labour, organized labour of any kind.

I will not attempt to indicate the number or nature of all the bridges we attempted to build in the 36 film subjects we executed in a three-month period. There were some initial successes in the contacts and discussions. Most of the playback took place in the Veterans Hall and here our initial screenings were not very successful. Everyone in town had television, either in black and white or colour. Down the road three miles was a drive-in theatre. Who would want to look at black and white home movies in the Veterans Hall? A lot of small children turned up at the screenings, along with some of the dedicated friends the film crew had made.

One of the most rewarding activities centered around the teenagers, both the Anglo and Chicano teenagers. We first of all made a fun film with the Chicano teenagers. This was such a pleasant experience that it grew into further involvement. We made a serious discussion film with the teenagers which was shown to the parents for their approval. We then made a fun film with the Anglo teenagers and a serious discussion film which also went to parents for approval. Toward the end of the three-month project we arranged a series of three screenings. The first was a cartoon show for children under twelve. They were then told that the next night was a teenage film festival for their brothers and sisters and that the films we had made would be run for teenagers only. The next night the hall was packed, Anglo kids on one side Chicanos on the other. The programme was a smash hit and while there was little discussion after the show there was broad appreciation shown.

We asked the teenagers to invite their parents the following night for the same show. The next night the

hall was packed and after the screening a considerable discussion went back and forth across the hall. The discussion was good humoured and people referred to racial differences in a relaxed way. One of the films we had run for the parents was a dialogue between two returned Chicano war veterans. These boys talked quietly about their views on prejudice; they are intelligent and charming and were probably about the only people that could have opened the discussion for that audience.

You might say that we were being manipulative in terms of strategy to confront people with a discussion in which few, Anglo or Chicano, had any desire to participate. I have an ambivalent feeling toward this question. While I feel the reaction of people generally was positive, I'm well aware that it could have turned negative and the result would have been socially destructive. I think it is preferable that people take their own time and set their own priorities in relation to social problem solving, but in situations where debate is not a traditional tool or where the existence of a forum has been cut away by damaging influences, there is a need to encourage a new forum.

You might say that we were competing with the mass media for attention. We did resort to show business to a certain extent. In order to make a significant document one must know who the audience is and what the message to be imparted is. When the subject and audience of the film start to participate in the production and playback then the game is slightly different.

One day I was filming an interview with a Mexican American labour contractor in an orange orchard outside Farmersville. He was responsible for providing the labour for large ranches and we were discussing some of the issues around labour, migrant families, workers' children, the problem of education, etc. The white ranch foreman whom the contractor knew well came to watch what was going on. One could not help but feel that he had been given a directive by the ranch owner to make sure we were O.K., despite the fact that our presence had been cleared through the Office.

The tone of the interview changed radically: the labour contractor seemed more careful about his choice of words, so I involved the white ranch foreman in the interview and the discussion became so interesting that I asked to come back the next day for a continuation of the interview. The next day the discussion moved into very sensitive areas. Questions of race and discrimination came up, and questions of social attitudes and social mixing were broached. Because the two men had an obvious mutual respect for each other they seemed relatively bold in their approach to the subjects, compared to other members of the community.

In editing the material the film group became very concerned that both men might jeopardize their positions by having their opinions exposed so freely before the community, which was very sensitive to questions of race and discrimination. Would the white ranch foreman's boss feel he was too sympathetic to the lot of the migrant labourers? Would the labour constituency of

the Mexican American labour contractor think he had been too "Uncle Tom" in his understanding of the economics of fruit farming and thus weaken his effectiveness as a contractor?

These were questions we discussed before we played back the material for the two subjects. I urged the two participants to try and see the film from the viewpoint of the people that each had to work with. When they had finished screening the material, both expressed complete satisfaction and endorsed the showing of the film with no qualifications.

The community screenings were highly successful and generated discussions in different groups which went far beyond the previous discussions in the town. What we had accidentally found were two ideal intermediaries between two worlds. Neither was rich or poor; both had oddly similar "status" despite totally different backgrounds. Both were articulate, persuasive, and sympathetic and both were cutting close to the bone, dissecting their own attitudes without damning society at large.

We were completely surprised several weeks later to find the Mexican American labour contractor elected to the presidency of the local union. The white farm foreman requested a screening of the film for his Lions Club in the next town and it generated a discussion which went on for a couple of hours.

When I described the event to the late John Grierson he asked me in his Socratic way what was achieved by this elaborate activity besides a vague community good will. I had to say that I felt that creative non-violent social change is impossible without the establishment of some basis of trust within a broad cross-section of a community. In a polarized situation one must begin this process somewhere. I believe Grierson approved of this response. (Grierson was Chairman of the NFB)

In the various projects I have been involved with—Fogo Island (Newfoundland), Farmersville (California), Drumheller (Alberta), and so on—I have seen surprising, unpredictable group responses to the playback of material that belonged to the group or was of direct interest to the group. I became convinced that this mirror effect had a profound influence on individual awareness and group awareness; to me it was so obvious that I am surprised that the application of the technique has not spread more rapidly.

When I played back the first film record of the Fogo Improvement Committee to the Committee they were embarrassed by their apparent procedural ineptness. The meeting had been a bore and the Committee agreed with some reluctance to run the film for the community. The community saw something completely different in the film and support for the Improvement Committee increased markedly. During the filming of the Improvement Committee meeting we had recorded a motion to invite Premier Smallwood to the Island. It was a fumbling but audacious move. During the time the film was being processed and edited the Premier did actually visit the Island and made some important commitments; the Islanders, through the film, were able

to see that the initiative had indeed been that of the Improvement Committee. The morale of both the Committee and the community increased.

I have seen dozens of such events in which the filmed record had a profound influence on a group, either as a catalyst for fresh discussion or as confirmation of the inner conviction of the group. At the same time a dull meeting recorded is a boringly dull meeting on film. And often that is all a group gets, its own boredom played back. It is often necessary for an animator or interrogator or interviewer to open fresh avenues of thought, or for a film editor to juxtapose relevant material in an order which yields a new and significant meaning. Both these methods are important.

A group may be locked in its habitual patterns of thought and expressions, inhibited, embarrassed, and generally at a stalemate. But for an animator to open a debate before the group is ready for it might be a bad thing and one might end up with a permanently inhibited group. For instance: in one outport village I made the mistake of running a film on welfare on the first screening in the community. When I returned the next week there were only kids in the hall.

I have ranged freely backwards and forwards between the group, the community, and the individual. I have talked about awareness and morale. Perhaps it is time to examine more carefully the effects that playback in the group or community context can have on an individual.

In many communities of limited literacy, the habitual response is, "We can't speak, we have no education." There is a belief in educational inferiority and there seems to be almost a compulsion for self-denigration before the mystique of education. Yet many people in these communities, because they are not influenced or inhibited by extensive schooling, have a great oral tradition of story-telling, versifying, singing, and so on. They can be witty and colourful and the language is sometimes richer than the homogenized textbook variety. A playback of this talent can change attitudes toward the educational mystique. To find in an isolated community not one, but several wise self-taught men is a shock for urban sophisticates.

But that is an isolated community, you might say. What about urban communities where the educational level is high? I believe a similar problem exists in relation to the media. People are inhibited by the media; they compare their own expression with the slick professionalism of the media. The media's status quo also generates a protective mystique about itself. So the isolated community has its inhibitor to real public dialogue, debate, and communication but so does the urban community.

The problem with both education and media is that they create the illusion of participation. One can feel concerned, have the illusion that one knows, that one can relate, but it may be only an illusion because the knowledge is not "fixed" in action, in real participation, which is the only basis of wisdom.

A do-it-yourself kit

As far as recording and playback are concerned, why take my word that it is valuable in group problem-solving? The equipment is usually readily available, sound tape or video tape, and it is easy to try out. Extensive technical experience and sophisticated equipment are not required. You will also need a good objective interviewer who is not on a personal ego trip, and an editor. Practically every group, business group, government office, school and home association have problems they want to solve. Communication becomes incredibly difficult, because of words, because of personalities. Get individual members to record their evaluation of the problem or problems separately, privately in very relaxed circumstances with guaranteed editorial rights to the individual. Then play the edited versions of these tapes to the group. If the individual presentations are cool (not emotional in an angry, accusatory way), the debate which follows will be cool and objective. The individuals will have the advantage of being able to modify their presentation with the possibility of reformulation of thought before the group sees their condensed tapes. Then the individual will have the advantage of seeing the reaction of the group in its negative and positive manifestations. This should be recorded. If the animator or interviewer can keep the circumstances cool but penetrating, the play-back of the edited tapes will reveal the variety of motivations and viewpoints.

Stick with it until there is the possibility of some consensus. Individuals should not be allowed to lose face so the work must be patiently done. If the advantages of such an exercise are not obvious at this stage, I would think your group is one of the unusual few that is so smoothly functioning and has such good communication that it does not benefit from a process of this kind. Or the group is hopeless.

If results are interesting, it might be possible to extend the communication process to other groups that impinge on the functioning or aspirations of your group.

When the basic revelations are accomplished, it might be a good idea to drop the system for a while and return to a normal mode of communication. That way you do not make a habit or crutch out of the process, besides, it does tend to be more cumbersome than liberating when things are flowing.

I'm convinced that anyone who enters into the exercise with an open mind will gain valuable insights about himself, his group, his community. It is mainly useful when it is a practical tool used with maximum good will, with faith that compromise, adaptation, and consensus are real social possibilities. Any cynicism, ego tripping, mind bending that individuals tend to inflict on the group will usually be exposed and not tolerated. But, like everything else, it is possible to pervert this process.

People might try to use a medium as weaponry to demolish opposition, to marshal support for a preconception or vested interest. But it is harder to hide

vested interest in this process than in a cleverly phrased inter-office memo. People also become adept at appearing before the camera. They develop control, as we have seen politicians do on network media. But the process demystifies the media itself, and that in itself is a kind of political-awareness gain for the average citizen. Also people gain confidence in their verbal skills and their organizational skills, which of course can develop into a new set of habits that in turn should be seen for what they are.

For an example of film or video as go-between, take a small town situation involving deep-rooted animosities. Although I have used film or video in such situations I would prefer to speak in generalities about them. Imagine two traditional enemies whose personal animosities prevent debate on any larger community issues. Each person has a constituency or group of people who have social or economic interdependency. Any possibility of community development or community consensus is impaired by the inability of the two to get together. But if one man sees the other as reasonable and rational on film or tape, his response is usually in the right tone for further discussion.

A lot of communication depends on tone of voice. A good interviewer can suggest a tone that will be conciliatory by the manner of his questioning. This is very different from network television public affairs interviewing, which often tends to bait the subject into an emotional response. The response of the subject need not be devoid of *feeling* but anger and accusation should be avoided—it won't build any bridges.

Questions which go right to the centre of a problem are usually not as useful as an oblique question. An example of a poor question might be: "Mr. Jones, tell me why the fish plant closed down in this town?" The answer: "The management of the plant was corrupt, they allowed certain fishermen special privileges and thus undermined local support." Sometimes names are involved in the answer. (This is not useful; everyone in the area will recognize the people involved, and some will be highly offended.)

A good question might be: "Tell me Mr. Jones, what kind of fish plant would best serve the needs of this community?" Answer: "A co-operative fish plant with highly trained professional management." This sounds like a dull approach but it is an approach which will reinforce the general opinion and allow people associated with the former bad management to concur. This might sound like manipulation. It is merely horse sense. Many community people with horse sense know how to phrase observations that are not offensive. If they don't they should be helped to. When people have arrived at some basis of agreement and can work together, questions can be sharpened and focused.

When the separate film or tapes of the two traditional enemies mentioned earlier are played back to a larger group, with their approval, it is usually found that their positions on a common problem are not irreconcilable.

Film or video can also exacerbate a situation beyond repair. I think this is the most likely circumstance to

develop if the practitioners do not adopt a few rules that are little more than basic etiquette.

Rule 1: Guarantee the subject's editorial rights. This encourages the subject to relax, to present his ideas as convincingly as possible. It also allows his family or friends the possibility of expressing their opinion. But basically it prevents the subject from being used, and from allowing himself to be used to his disadvantage.

The group or community should be allowed the same privileges as the individual in relation to its film, namely editorial rights before the film is played outside the community. In this way the community will not lose face before the larger community. This will aid in determining whether the film record or tape record is a true and accurate reflection of the community and enlists people's interest in a way that nothing else will. By asking people to help determine the balance of emphasis, you involve them in solving the real problem.

But this requires a real interaction with the community. The filmmaker-animator must stand beside the screen and *hear* what people have to say about his intercession or his record. By involving people, by having them engage in the actual physical work of editing, you also achieve a balance not possible any other way.

Rule 2: If there is to be an exchange of information between two people, two groups, two communities, between a region and a government, then every effort should be made to arrange a prior guarantee of response. For instance: a communication project was developed for a penitentiary. Video tape was used to create a loop between inmates and guards, between the guards and the warden's office and back. There was also a loop developed between the penitentiary and the Solicitor General's office. All participants understood they would receive a response to questions or an input of information from the other end of the loop, and they would be guaranteed editorial rights. In my opinion this is a fundamental element that is often left out of communication practice.

Information and government

Some people suggest that one of the most important problems of centralized government is the inertia of bureaucracy and the unresponsive nature of the government core.

Government needs information. Any good politician develops a political antenna over the years that receives attitudes, people's attitudes. This is the most difficult element in any policy development formula, the attitude factor.

In large-scale, complex modern societies the attitudes on the periphery are a long way from the centre. The matter on the outside of the circle is thin but as you move toward the centre it becomes very dense. Information moving to the centre must compress as it travels whether it is statistical, economic, social, or attitudinal information. And when it becomes too compressed it is totally deformed. The time available at the centre is

very limited, the space is very limited, and consequently there cannot be a real communication system in terms of two-way communication. The flow of movement from the outside to the centre is a slow or even decelerating movement. The flow from the centre to the outside is instantaneous.

It is like a telephone conversation in a space where one line can carry messages faster than the speed of light, the other line carries messages at the speed of sound. One participant hears the other almost instantaneously but his voice requires a month to travel the distance in the other direction.

I cannot conceive of a complete democratic solution to the communication problem involving government. Certainly one can hardly believe in an electronic referendum. But we must make an attempt to improve communication between the various levels of government and citizens, and the more decentralized the power of the media the better, not only in terms of information flow but in terms of balance and the psychological morale of people.

Insights

Communication is essentially a dialogue; dialogue depends on expression, response, and attitude modification. It is an emotional as well as an intellectual process. It requires a continuity and a mutual respect, the desire to relate, the hope to learn. It depends upon a mutual interest. It depends upon the common knowledge that change in the universe is continuous and that few human attitudes or value systems can ever be permanent.

Let us return again to some of the positive possibilities of media in relation to the development of individual awareness, in the hope that this will give us some clues about approaches on a larger scale. What kind of insights does playback induce?

First there is the personal visual appearance that is usually different than anticipated. We are used to looking at ourselves in mirrors which reverse our image. A photograph alters this but it is static. We can look at ourselves in playback as others see us in motion. It can be a shocking moment if we have built up strong illusions about our appearance, and most people have. But once past the moment, the playback can be an aid in becoming more objective about ourselves. For very few people is this process demoralizing.

Then there is the voice. We hear ourselves through the cavities and resonating surfaces of our own head. Others hear something different. This is a shock. We may be appalled at our diction, phrasing, uncertainty, mannerisms, or style but once past this we begin to apply critical judgement to the formulation and expression of our ideas.

There is the playback of the individual within the group in interaction. The individual can see the role-playing that he indulges in. He can see the change of masks as they go on and come off; if the recording has been

conducted under a circumstance where the group has become enough at ease with the recording process, then the members virtually forget they are being recorded. It allows the individual to be self-critical. So in the playback the individual sees not only his relationship to other members but he understands his motivation in the changes that different personalities engender in him.

Earlier I mentioned the playback process as influencing the verbal skills of people. If an extensive playback of both the verbalization and action within a problem-solving group where physical work is required could be effected, there would be a new and profound effect on the individual and the group.

Now of course the complete coverage of a group for a long period of time, and playback of everything they do, is impossible unless there is extensive condensing or editing. But key situations can be covered and played back, and individuals and the group can derive clues as to the motivations and meaning of their work together. I believe that insights that are gained by an individual or group can be obtained by a community.

With the advent of cable television it seems possible that the media might again be considered as a community reflector, an extension of the natural communication elements of the community. It has been suggested that it might open a broader forum and become for a large community what the town hall was for a small community. There are a lot of possibilities and some difficulties.

Let us examine briefly Thunder Bay's "Town Talk" experiment in 1971. Here is the scenario:

A minister in Thunder Bay, believing television could be used to increase local awareness, developed a five-minute daily programme which was broadcast by the local station. The possibility of live phone hook-ups and interaction with panelists was introduced. It became popular immediately. A group of middle-class people, seeing the possibilities of the show, assisted by a former employee of the National Film Board living in Thunder Bay and a National Film Board distribution man, extended the show to one half hour a week done mostly in a studio. Success! Why not extend the programme to include material shot outside the studio by using portable VTR? Why not increase the programme time and go on cable TV? Perhaps Challenge for Change of the National Film Board would help finance the experiment, train support staff, work out technical problems? Yes! The Challenge for Change Committee in Ottawa was interested.

Film Board representatives were sent to Thunder Bay. They selected students from a university, trained them in portable VTR and film techniques, solicited the participation of local groups, started programming on the local cable station, and determined that inexpensive half-inch tape could indeed be transmitted on cable with good results. Continued cable station participation was arranged. Good programmes were produced with both studio and location and phone-in components. Funding was arranged for a period of time.

The feed-back from Thunder Bay to Ottawa was that the "Town Talk" crew was moving too fast. The recently amalgamated city council didn't understand the purpose of "Town Talk"; explanations ensued. Ottawa and Challenge for Change pressed to have the Thunder Bay council establish a charter board, a cross-section of the community to regulate the programming so that there would be a balance, a guarantee of fairness in programming. The "Town Talk" crew and support committee felt this as an organizational burden on top of the pressure of programming. The presence of the crew at certain town meetings became a political threat. Stress and communication gaps built up between the crew, the original supporting "Town Talk" committee, Challenge for Change, various members of government in Ottawa who got feed-back from their own local sources. It was rumoured that the "Town Talk" crew were radicals. The local station decided that programmes must be submitted pre-recorded three weeks before broadcast and that no live phone-ins would be acceptable. The cable station held that they were responsible for what appeared, as are all broadcasters, and they needed the guarantee of pre-viewing.

The project was therefore terminated because programming of this type is valuable only if it is topical and only if it has immediacy.

I have summarized this situation to indicate a few of the difficulties that the expansion of a good idea encounters. I was very distressed at the time that the idea did not take hold and there were efforts to analyse what went wrong, to blame something or someone: the conservatism of the local establishment, the radicalism of the students, the inability of the middle-class support committee to get it together, the demands of Ottawa and Challenge for Change for the establishment of a charter board. In retrospect the key to the problem was in the lack of broad public support. The public was intrigued by the initial impact and novelty, and they appreciated the idea. Many groups asked to be interviewed or filmed for promotional reasons but the programming failed to gain, in the period it was exposed, a broad base of committed and participating people.

A final hopeful note

Bill Reid, a director at the National Film Board, made a video tape of a discussion with his brother and parents. The dialogue was so fascinating and revealed such intense difference of opinion that he decided to make a film on the theme of two generations with his parents' cooperation. It was called "Coming Home."

In order to make a balanced film of the different points of view everyone was guaranteed editorial input. The differences of opinion were extensive and some of the subjects touched upon generated very emotional responses. For years the family had had communication problems. Bill wondered during the filming whether he was doing the right thing.

An assembly of the film was played back to the family and then more filming was done. When the cutting copy was complete it was played back. All the participants claimed a remarkable change of attitude and an increased awareness and appreciation of the viewpoints of the other members of the family.

There was the question of whether the exposure of the private feelings of the family to a broad audience would be damaging to relationships within the family. We have seen examples of the destructive impact that media exposure has had on families. The metamorphosis in relationships was real enough to withstand any exposure.

Sensitive group discussions should be similarly conducted and the record of the discussions should be withheld from dissemination or broadcast until the group is in complete agreement on the release of the record. That will usually occur if the group manages a real accomplishment.

I include this example of a family documentary film because it is interesting to me that a media technique designed to help poor or bypassed people to gain a voice should also be useful for a middle-class family, with all the advantages of education and money, to find a better method of getting together. When this occurred it then became a record which was useful to other people. In this approach no-one is put down or demeaned or loses face.

In the film the interviewer-filmmaker was also one of the subjects. His attitude, I observed, underwent a considerable change, from being critical of his parents to being self-critical. In this and other films the *cinéma vérité*, candid-eye approach moves from a detached, critical position to an involved, socially responsible, self-critical position and this shift is bound to positively alter the media as a whole.

This is an advanced effect of playback: not only is the world reflected by the media mirror being altered but the media mirror itself is being changed. Hopefully it is being improved as a tool in a better world.

Forming a group and using media

Wendy O'Flaherty

This is written for people who want to form a group or who have formed a group, and want to use media, including cable television, to assist them in achieving the group's objectives.

The group

You will be more successful in dealing with the media, government, companies, and funding agencies if you work as a member of a group rather than as an individual. Politicians, the media, and people in general pay more attention to an idea or a request which is supported by a group and is not merely one person's opinion.

Group effort can be better than work by individuals. In fact, a group often forms because the members realize that they have a better grasp of the reality of a certain area than the so-called experts. This happens often in city planning where people living in an area have a better idea of some of the needs of their neighbourhood than the official planners.

Marshall McLuhan has described an expert as a person who never makes a mistake on his way to the grand fallacy. Groups can sometimes point out the grand fallacies to the experts.

FORMING A GROUP

Groups form most easily around a specific, immediate issue such as stopping a neighbourhood zoning change, getting a traffic light installed, or acting on a particular consumer issue. If your purpose is broad or educational, you should be prepared to work over a longer period of time to get established. Or you should form your group around one well-focused issue which relates to the broad cause.

The main requirement for forming a group is to find several people you can rely upon, if necessary, to do most of the work. Regardless of high levels of enthusiasm at first meetings, most groups survive on the impetus and work of three or four people.

Groups forming around an issue are often biased toward one particular view of the issue. While this is natural, it is important to avoid too narrow a viewpoint. If you don't have a broad membership, appoint some members to be responsible for liaison with "the other side." If you don't do this, you may find that you work hard, push for action, only to realize you have overlooked vital information which others had. If there are legal implications to your work, make sure you get advice from a lawyer friend or a storefront legal aid group.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM GROUP WORK

One thing which people often don't anticipate when they're involved in starting a group is drop-outs. In my experience, the drop-out rate is very high and you should plan on it from the beginning. When it happens it should not be taken as a sign that the group isn't functioning, assuming other aspects of your work look good.

A healthy group often has a core of hard-working people, while the broader membership is somewhat transitory. I feel this helps a group to stay relevant and avoid introversion. It does mean, of course, that you have to do publicity to attract new members. And you have a continuing job keeping new members informed and involved.

You can also expect that most group work is going to take a significant amount of your time. The common situation where one or two members find themselves doing most of the work can be avoided by appointing specific people to do the regular jobs, and committees of one or more people to handle specific short term projects.

LEADERSHIP AND PROCEDURE

It's currently fashionable to avoid appointing a chairperson and to dispense with meeting procedure. This is done so that people will have a chance to participate equally and spontaneously in meetings. However, when no chairperson or meeting procedures are established, a situation is created favoring the extroverted and experienced members and discriminating against the more timid members or those less agile with words. It is fairer if you appoint a person to chair meetings according to simple rules of procedure.

A simple meeting procedure would require that:

1. there be an agenda of items to be discussed; the agenda can be added to at the beginning of the meeting so it's not out of date and doesn't limit discussion
2. one item is discussed at a time
3. every member gets a chance to discuss each item within a reasonable amount of time
4. only one person talks at a time and the chairperson controls who is to talk, should it become necessary that he or she do so
5. each item is dealt with by some action, not merely discussed without conclusion.

When decisions are required you can either take a vote after your discussion or arrive at a consensus. I prefer a system where decisions are made by consensus except when there are obvious splits in the group, a lack of

time, or a very large group, in which case a vote may be taken.

If you're unfamiliar with the meeting process I suggest that you attend a couple of city council or school board meetings and watch the mechanics they use to deal with matters. Groups which don't have members with business backgrounds should look seriously at the question of meeting procedure if they will be dealing with governments, courts, or companies. It will be very difficult to deal with them unless you have a good understanding of how they work and can design the form (not the content) of your work to fit their molds.

DETERMINING OBJECTIVES

A common problem with groups is their tendency to confuse objectives with "shoulds and shouldn'ts." It's very easy to get people together and agree on all kinds of shoulds and shouldn'ts. But unless these feelings are translated into specific objectives for action, little will be accomplished.

An educational group might agree, for example, that schooling is too narrow to meet students' needs for the future. An intention to right this wrong is not good enough. It must be translated into objectives for action such as, for example, to change school legislation to allow students their choice of schools and to fund alternate schools run by private companies and citizen co-ops.

A civic group which believes that citizens should participate in local government decisions might translate that generally into the objective of getting city council to establish a budget, a staff, and a procedure to handle citizen participation.

Of course, some objectives are more obvious. If the city's cutting down the trees on your street and you don't want them to, your immediate objective is to stop the chain saws. However, more action over the longer term may be needed.

The group and media

The first thing to realize is that radio, television, and cable television are regulated industries and they all have a responsibility to the public. Newspapers are not regulated but they are generally pretty good about public service, often better in fact than many radio and TV stations. So there may be good reason for you to ask your local stations and newspapers to do something for your group.

On commercial radio and television stations the public service possibilities amount to very little—if you're lucky and have your material properly prepared, a 30-second public service announcement at a time or times when the station hasn't been able to sell the spot to a paying advertiser. Of course some stations have developed more systematic ways of dealing with requests for public service announcements.

Cable companies are encouraged to set aside one channel for community programming. A great many cable companies have a small staff and studio facilities for making programmes for the community channel. These facilities generally serve the public and are free of charge.

Newspapers handle many more information items than radio and television stations and are therefore receptive to receiving input from community groups. Weekly newspapers are particularly eager for local items.

PUBLIC SERVICE AND NEWS

Public service items are about events or groups which serve non-profit causes. The United Appeal and similar agencies usually get their share of public service announcements during their fund-raising drives. Most newspapers have special columns for announcements of meetings and other events and may run a small article on your upcoming meeting or event.

News is something entirely different. Radio, television, and newspapers define news narrowly and you will have to take a cool, objective look at the information you want to put out to see if it rates as news. It probably doesn't in a majority of cases. To get on to radio or television newscasts or in the main pages of the newspaper you have to have information which is controversial or decidedly unusual. And it has to be focused and topical.

ADVERTISING AND PR

You pay for ads; you don't pay for public relations coverage. The advantage of paying for an ad is that you can be sure the information is printed/aired by the media of your choice, and also you can control what is written/said and how it is presented. You can't do this with public relations. You distribute your information and you take your chances.

The advantages of PR are that it's free and it runs as editorial material which will probably have more credibility for the reader/listener/viewer.

PR material and advertising complement each other and it is usually most effective to use both in an integrated programme. If you haven't money for advertising, there's a lot you can do with public relations. I would avoid spending any money on advertising unless you have a very substantial budget.

You should be able to express your message in a few words. That's always a good test to see whether all concerned agree on it. Some messages are easier to communicate than others. This message is easy:

Parents Who Care are holding a meeting on Thurs., Mar. 9 at St. Paul's Church, 240—15 Ave. at 8 pm. Guest speaker Dick Armitage will talk on "Drugs and the Law."

This message is difficult because of its complexity:

Your MP, John Gladhand, really has been working hard for you in Ottawa during the past four years

even though you haven't seen or heard much from him, and we want you to vote for him again in the next election.

This message is difficult because people don't want to receive it:

You should have regular check-ups for cancer, since cancer is curable more often than not, especially when it is diagnosed early.

The first message could be handled easily without advertising but the second and third require advertising and creative talent to communicate effectively. And even then they may not work, because of their topics.

No matter what you may think about the intelligence of the general public or your local media, both are quick to sense untruths and half-truths. When they sense them, your publicity effort turns against you.

Being honest about your message may be difficult. How many campaign managers working for nothing for an admired political candidate are willing to face the fact that he has neglected his constituents? How many public health agencies are willing to admit that the public is frightened by their educational work?

And yet you must face up to this kind of situation if your communication is going to work. It doesn't pay to use publicity in the way people used perfume before bathing became common practice. No amount of glowing language in a press release will cover up a half-truth or enliven a dull event. In fact, it usually harms the group's concern and can damage your relationship with the press.

If you have a message like the cancer message, then you want to reach a broad audience and you need mass media coverage. However, if you're talking about pap tests for low-income women, you're no longer talking about a general audience. If you have the names and addresses of the people you wish to contact, you shouldn't necessarily be thinking of using mass media to reach them although, considering the cost of large mailings, you may still wish to go the free route. Or use both routes for impact.

You may be able to round up your intended audience in a community centre and get your message across with a speech, slide show, or video tape presentation. This might be the case for the neighbourhood wanting to preserve its trees.

REACHING YOUR AUDIENCE

If you are aiming at a very general audience, it is most effective to use all the media you can, as well as other forms of communication available to you. The more the better. If your audience is not general, but selected, then use the medium or media most likely to reach your particular group of people. And do go by your audience's tastes. I'm reminded of a series of teen concerts which were planned to interest young people in symphony music. The concerts were advertised in the newspaper and through school music teachers with

predictably dismal results. They should have been on the local rock station.

All written material should be typed and double spaced. It should be short and written in plain, factual language. Any material you send out should contain the name and address of your group, the date, and the name and phone number of a contact person within the group. Material should be titled News Release or Public Service Announcement.

Generally speaking, public service announcements for radio and television should be 30 seconds long, not longer. News releases should not exceed one page or one and a half pages at the very most.

When distributing your information, establish personal contacts with news directors (for news) and traffic managers (for public service announcements) in radio and television stations, and editors, columnists, and friendly reporters in newspapers. Service these contacts well by keeping in touch and feeding nothing but good information. Have one person do all the contact work.

CABLE TELEVISION

Cable offers you the opportunity for a special kind of media experience. Audiences which watch the community channel on cable television are small, so if you have a one-shot, mass-audience message, cable isn't the medium to use. However, if you have a project of longer term and your message is directed to a defined group, then cable may be an ideal medium, particularly when it is used in conjunction with other media and other forms of communication.

The main advantages that cable television offers are that you can generally get a lot of airtime—a whole programme or series of programmes; you can have a high degree of control over the content of the programme; and you can direct your programme to a special audience without worrying about whether it appeals to the mass audiences of commercial media.

While cable television companies differ a great deal in their policies, attitudes to participation, and the amount of air time and staff available, they offer a genuine opportunity unavailable elsewhere.

The community channel is non-commercial and you are not charged for programmes produced by or for your group. Most companies will allow you to say pretty well what you like on a programme. Some companies will teach you to operate equipment and participate directly in the making of your programmes. Some groups decide to train crews from among their members and take over the entire production of their programmes.

APPROACHING THE CABLE COMPANY

The only way to find out about the cable television company in your area is to phone them and go down and see them. There is a lot of rhetoric about access to the community channel, and a confrontation stance vis-

à-vis the cable companies is held by a certain counter-culture élite. In my view this is unfortunate. There certainly are cable television companies which do not do as much as can be expected of them. They don't really have much of an incentive to be interested in community programming. But the programming staff often does. And in any case, confrontation over "access" is a red herring issue which has never assisted groups in using cable television.

If you make reasonable demands on the cable television company and respect their conditions of work, then you'll probably have no trouble getting air time. You may have to wait in line for it but you'll probably get it. I think it comes down to a question of whether you're interested more in having a confrontation or in getting on with the work you've decided to do.

Phone the programme director, tell him something about your group, and ask him about the possibility of doing a programme. Make an appointment to see him and, when you do, take along an outline of the programme or the series you want to do.

Your outline can be very simple and you don't need any special knowledge to draw it up. It should do three things:

1. state the topic you wish to investigate, the artistic concept you wish to develop, the message to be conveyed, the event you want covered, or the idea you may want to express
2. explain how you expect to accomplish this in visual terms
3. provide basic production information (see below).

People think in terms of written or spoken messages and a lot of cable television programmes are "talking head" shows with essentially spoken messages. But television is a visual medium and introducing visual material to your programme will improve it significantly.

You may use slides, demonstrations in the studio, or video tape shot on location and introduced to your programme when it is aired. Many cable companies have portapak, which are portable video units that you can use yourself with a minimum of instruction. If the cable television company doesn't have a portapak, you often can borrow one from a local agency or college. (Another chapter of this publication, "Resources in the active community," will help you locate such resources.) Some cable companies have larger portable equipment capable of covering meetings and sports events.

When you deal with the programme director you should ask whether you can use slides and portapak material and whether he can lend you the necessary equipment.

The production information the cable television company needs for studio productions is, for example, how many people you plan to have on the programme and how you want them arranged in the studio. They also need to know if you plan to show slides or any kind of pictures, maps, etc. You should discuss the title of your show or series with the cable television staff and how you're going to get the title on the screen. Some

companies will prepare titling for you; others require you to bring your own studio card with the title on it. Some groups prefer to make their own.

A mobile or remote production shot at some location outside the studio is more complex and takes more time than a studio production. You need to supply the company with the information mentioned above and in addition you should:

1. ensure that you have permission to tape at the location
2. provide the address and good directions to the exact location, room number, etc.
3. go to the location and determine whether it is reasonably well lit or whether you think extra lighting may be needed
4. determine if there is access to electrical power
5. offer to have a couple of people help with loading and unloading the equipment if it has to be moved any distance
6. find out how to get into the building, particularly if you will be taping after hours.

WHAT THE CABLE COMPANY EXPECTS FROM YOU

The cable staff expect that, as a minimum, you will arrive with all your people well ahead of your taping or air time; you will let them know in advance of any problems or changes; you will be reasonably well organized; you will not break or abuse any equipment you have borrowed and you will return it on time. They're also thankful if you don't wear white when you're appearing on a programme since white does bad things to television pictures.

They do *not* expect you to be professional or to have any specialized knowledge about television production. That's their job. You may find that they are willing to teach you, should you show an interest and they have the time.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THEM

The programming staff of the cable company works on a very small budget. The cost of a single episode of "Cannon" equals the entire year's programme budget of two or three established cable television companies. This means that cable companies are short on staff and they may not be particularly well-trained or experienced. Most often companies rely on volunteer cameramen and other volunteer help. You may be asked to supply volunteers and this can be an enjoyable experience.

I have found that production staff in cable television companies are normally paid much less than the linemen (the people who put the cable on the poles and into your home). There is also a large turnover of production staff.

Production staff usually work long hours. Add to this the volunteers and the programming public coming and going and you have anything from periodic panic to perpetual chaos in the programming department. The

more open a company is to your participation, the more disorganized their work becomes. The way to organize work is to cut down on public participation, so the trade-off here will be important to you.

The most consistent complaint resulting from this participation process is erased or lost tapes. If you are doing regular programming with a cable television company and need to keep taped material for more than a day or two, ask the company if you can have a tape allocated to your group (tapes are usually numbered) and if you can take it home with you. If the company agrees, as they may if you've been reasonably serious about your programming commitment, then the care of the tape is in your hands.

The same advice applies to title cards, slides, or other graphics that you may use regularly on your programme. Don't leave them at the cable company unless you see that they are well organized and have enough staff to cope with the work at hand, as well as safe storage space.

You can expect equipment breakdowns from time to time. Television equipment is sophisticated and cable television companies try to use the less expensive models, often because it is the only way they can afford to programme at all or because the newer, lighter equipment gives more flexibility. However, breakdowns occur frequently. Some cable companies have a technician to maintain and repair the equipment, but many rely on a handy lineman from their service department or the manufacturers' servicemen who are not always available on the spot.

Equipment which is taken out of the studio for remote tapings is particularly prone to breakdown. Portapaks break down very frequently because they're loaned to an unskilled and sometimes careless public.

If you are using a portapak or participating in a remote taping, you should always tape a small test segment before your real taping, play the segment back and make sure that the picture and sound are all right. Then begin your real taping. If there's anything wrong with the picture or sound, don't proceed with the taping until the problem has been fixed. The tape quality can't be improved much after it has been made.

PRESENTING YOUR PROGRAMME

Many people considering programming on cable television worry that they will be inadequate as programmers. I think this is a result of our being brainwashed to believe that only products from expert people and complex machines are of any value. This is most certainly not true. We are now beginning to realize the value of such things as ordinary feelings, lay knowledge, handcrafted products, and things we do and make ourselves.

One of the things we can do ourselves is use media to communicate with others. This is a new idea. Not many

people are used to making their own television shows or watching the community channel. Unlike the commercially-produced programmes, your programmes hopefully will be down-to-earth communication about local issues, artistic expression, local talent people who share some of your own concerns, hopes, or hangups.

The commercial media, run by professionals, drop their programming on us like pearls of wisdom from some high, mysterious place. Your programmes may not be pearls of wisdom. They may not look particularly professional. But that may be their strength and not necessarily their weakness. Your programmes may communicate something more to some of your neighbours than does an American crime series, and you may offer more solutions to local problems than a network documentary. Amateur programmes are valid. They are refreshing and provide qualities rarely available in professional work.

GETTING PEOPLE TO WATCH

You cannot assume that, because you send a programme out on cable television, people are going to watch the programme. Audiences for the community channels are usually very small. There doesn't appear to be a regular number of people watching since the programmes are so varied in subject matter and quality.

If you put together an interesting show you can count on picking up a fair number of dial twisters at the time the programme is aired. Very occasionally, when you have a particularly interesting person on your programme, you can draw a large audience from people who are twisting the dial. When I worked in cable television we had two open-line programmes which put the phone exchange out of action in the area, so we knew they had big audiences.

You should consider the publicity for the programme as an integral and necessary part of cable television programming. When titling your programme, choose a title which describes the content of your programme so that, if the cable television schedule is listed in the local newspapers, you are letting people interested in the subject know that the programme is there and what it is about.

You may have to devise ways of promoting the programme to obtain viewers. You can supply advance programme information to the cable television company and ask them to send out a news release on the programme. Or you can send out your own news release and try to get newspaper coverage. It is helpful to send a news release to clubs, agencies, and institutions which may be interested in your programme. You may ask to have the programme date announced at meetings and included in newsletters. And the cable television company may "promo" the programme (that is, run an ad on it on the community channel and/or the time-and-weather channel prior to the air date).

Community councils

Mario Santerre

The development of community television in Quebec is associated to an increasing extent with groups that are aware of the potential of the community channel. The structure and role of such groups vary greatly from one place to another; their main objectives, however, are similar. These groups have come to be known as "community councils."

The first such group was formed in the Lake St. John region. The group, *Télévision Communautaire St-Félicien Inc.*, soon became a reference centre for community groups that utilized cable TV programming facilities.

Some time later, a group of citizens in Sherbrooke set up a similar body; in Quebec City, community television officials and local citizens aware of the potential of the community channel developed a new type of group known as a "community assembly."

It should be pointed out that there are different interpretations of the community council concept. Many still think of it as an agreement in principle between cable operators and those involved in community programming, regarding in particular the use of equipment and premises. Other people emphasize programme ownership and responsibility for content.

What form do these agreements take? Some are contracts duly signed by both parties; others are purely oral agreements. Some groups go even further and apply for incorporation in order to give legal status to their organization.

These variations reflect two important aspects of community television in Quebec. The first involves the unequal development of the various community councils. In some localities which are taking their first steps in community television, the groups involved are at first informal and then become more structured to deal with problems as they arise.

The other aspect, which is the more important in several respects, involves regional disparities. The situation in a region with more than 100,000 subscribers is clearly not the same as that in another with barely 15,000. In addition, even two places with approximately the same number of subscribers (1000, say) often do not look upon community television in the same way (St-Raymond and St-Pascal for example). Community television is affected by the peculiarities of the locality in which it is situated, a fact that makes attempts at comparison difficult.

Although community councils have not been around for long, their existence has already given rise to both conflict and optimism. In the following pages we shall describe the origins and development of the community councils in a number of localities.

St-Félicien

The first community television committee of 15 people was formed on 29 November 1970, at a meeting of all the concerned organizations in St-Félicien. A group of about 80 citizens representing 50 organizations formed an interim committee, which was given the task of setting up a non-profit association. On 5 April 1971, the provincial government replied to their application by issuing letters patent creating the corporation known as *La Télévision Communautaire St-Félicien Inc.* One year later, the local cable operator signed an agreement with the community television group.

Since June 1971, community television has been of considerable economic importance for St-Félicien, and has underwritten a number of local projects.

The aims of *La Télévision Communautaire St-Félicien Inc.* are as follows:

1. To develop a sense of participation and to encourage different generations to work together and understand one another better.
2. To foster better all-round communication, as well as moral, intellectual, social, educational, and economic development.
3. To organize and direct a community television association.
4. To produce television programmes in line with these goals and make available to all its members the facilities for self-expression and communication offered by the community television.

The association is made up of several committees, of which the most important is undoubtedly the programming committee. Its main features are as follows.

The programming committee is made up of representatives from various community groups. The committee also includes a legal advisor and a representative from the production team. The committee has between six and ten members.

The programming committee defines the subjects to be dealt with on the air. It looks for, receives, studies, and selects programme ideas. It establishes priorities. It keeps in touch with the local community and determines programme content. It is not therefore a management committee, but rather a clearing-house that assures smooth, efficient community TV operations. The programming committee has a responsibility to elicit through its members the participation of interests in every sector of the community. The programming committee also has a responsibility to poll the citizens on a regular basis to get their reactions to programme content and format. It analyzes the results and creates new modes of participation as necessary.

The community operator has put one channel at the disposal of the community council.

The community council was required to take out insurance against any claims or legal actions which might be taken directly, jointly, and severally in response to a slanderous, blasphemous, or seditious utterance.

The community council has agreed with the cable operator to make every effort to maintain a position of strict commercial and political impartiality and to conduct itself in such a way as to keep its programmes free of propagandist material. When the community council foresees that an upcoming programme might contain such material, it will broadcast it only after consultation with the cable operator.

The population of St-Félicien has shown great interest in community television and has supported it through financial contributions. Most organizations in the area also contribute to its financing. The municipal council of St-Félicien has donated \$2800 and the parish council \$800. Contributions from the public have amounted to about \$10,000.

To date, 700 people in St-Félicien have obtained community television membership cards. Most organizations in St-Félicien have contributed to community television as honorary members. Membership card holders may attend the annual general meeting and participate in the voting. A popularity rating survey revealed that 89% of the local people would like to see community television continue in its present form.

Sherbrooke

In February 1972, the Ligue pour le développement social (social development league) became interested in community television. It decided to provide an organizer to co-ordinate the community television effort in Sherbrooke. National Cablevision Ltd. said that it would co-operate in setting up a community channel.

On 1 March 1972, about 30 organizations interested in community television got together for an information meeting. At that time they decided to form an interim committee to establish guidelines for community television in Sherbrooke. The new body was given the name of "community organization," and later became known as Inter-Media.

In March 1972, the community organization called an information meeting which was attended by some 40 people representing 20 citizens' groups and organizations in Sherbrooke. A provisional ten-member executive committee was then set up to make the people of Sherbrooke aware of community television and to call a general meeting of all those interested in participating in it.

The committee prepared a brief defining the scope of community television and presented their ideas to

National Cablevision. The brief described among other things the role to be played by those concerned.

In the meantime, four working committees were formed and assigned specific tasks:

1. Production and programming: to contact groups and organizations interested in producing programmes and to decide with them what they wish to accomplish; to set up a community programming model and establish programme selection criteria.

2. Monitoring and participation: to determine programme needs and make provision for a periodic evaluation of programmes in cooperation with university teaching staff; to make the people of Sherbrooke aware of the existence of community television.

3. Technical: to train those interested in the operation of equipment, and provide them with technical assistance in the production of videotapes; to pool human and technical resources to produce the maximum number of programmes possible.

4. Organization: to be concerned with incorporation, financing, and the possibilities of using community resources; to draft a charter, submit a financing structure, and find means for self-financing.

At meetings with the directors of National Cablevision-Sherbrooke, the Inter-Media group asked for control over the programming on the community channel.

National Cablevision and Inter-Media finally agreed on a compromise solution which involved the formation of an experimental advisory committee on programming. National Cablevision then called a general meeting of all Sherbrooke organizations interested in the development of community television. About 40 organizations responded. This body then elected a committee of seven from seven different fields of endeavour—social, religious, economic, recreational, labour, education, and citizens' groups. The committee had to team up with National Cablevision's programming director.

The mandate of the advisory committee on programming was to act as spokesman for groups and individuals in Sherbrooke in dealings with National Cablevision; to promote the production of programmes; to establish priorities and selection criteria for programme suggestions; to establish a timetable corresponding to these priorities; to ensure that reliable studies are continually carried out to determine the interest shown by the people of Sherbrooke in the programmes presented.

Over the course of 1973, the advisory committee on programming held 23 meetings and produced 200 hours of programming (160 hours of community programmes and 40 hours of local programmes).

Quebec City

In October 1972, the head of local programming for Télé-Cable de Québec Inc. said that he would like to see a community council formed in Quebec City. According to him, there was no question here of setting up a highly structured body that would seek to be

representative of the whole population of Quebec City. This would be unrealistic in such a large city with so many groups whose interests were so varied. Thus the term community "assembly" rather than "council" was chosen, since it suggests a greater flexibility and spontaneity in the planning of community programming.

This was the concept behind the community assembly. It generated two basic rules regarding membership. First, all individuals, groups or associations participating or wishing to participate in community television activities shall be considered members of the community assembly. Second, all members shall have equal and full membership, regardless of their title or level of representation. The community assembly is therefore composed of individuals interested in the development of community television who participate equally in discussions and decisions regarding the direction community programming should take. Meetings are held once a month.

The community assembly created four committees to carry out its operations:

1. Structuring committee (provisional): to study and suggest various possibilities for the legal constitution of the community assembly.
2. Programming committee: to define programming objectives and quality and content criteria, and to co-ordinate the production and broadcasting of programmes.
3. Production committee: to set up an on-going training programme to create a pool of people able to produce television programmes.
4. Promotion committee: to make the population aware of community television and to promote its goals and recruit participants.

Until the planning committee proposes an official structure for the community assembly, a temporary executive composed of the heads of the various committees is ensuring the smooth operation of community television. After a series of meetings and discussions on the structure of the community assembly, its members decided to acquire a full-time president, preferably recruited from among the citizens' groups, who would assume responsibility for the running of community television in cooperation with the programming director; they also decided to take steps to incorporate the community assembly under Part Three of the Companies Act of Quebec (as a non-profit organization).

St-Pascal de Kamouraska

This small municipality is similar to St-Félicien with respect to the size of the cable television firm, but the development followed by its community council was unique in several respects.

The Centre Social St-Pascal Inc. wanted to set up community programming designed principally to inform the population about the existence and potential of community television. In order to carry out its project,

the Centre Social St-Pascal Inc. signed two agreements, one at the end of 1971 with the St-Pascal cable firm, and the other in January 1972 with the St-Pascal school board.

The agreement between the St-Pascal cable firm and the Centre Social St-Pascal Inc. provided that the existing cable system in St-Pascal be used for the broadcasting of programmes. It was a rental agreement (\$1 a year) which made basic equipment available to the project organizers. It also made the cable firm responsible for installing the connections required between the studio and the head end, and for seeing to the necessary repair work. The agreement gave the Centre Social St-Pascal Inc. ownership of and responsibility for the content of the programmes broadcast on the channel reserved for its use. It was also to pay for the insurance against damage to the rented equipment. Finally, it gave the Centre Social St-Pascal Inc., through its cable television committee, responsibility for the channel's operation and programming in accordance with its objectives and possibilities.

The agreement with the St-Pascal school board granted the Centre Social St-Pascal Inc. premises in one of the local schools for a \$1 rental fee, in return for which the Centre Social St-Pascal Inc. agreed to: assume responsibility for the insurance payments involved; use the premises according to normal rules of cleanliness, quiet, and order; release the board from any responsibility for the equipment used for the project; use the premises in accordance with the regulations laid down by the board concerning use of school premises.

These two agreements laid the formal groundwork for community television in St-Pascal.

We have just described the main events surrounding the creation and development of community councils in four different regions of Quebec. One of the first points to note is the great diversity of the experiments at all stages of their development—inception, problems encountered in the course of development, format of the councils, their functions, and so forth.

This situation of course greatly complicates any attempt at systematization; it is possible nonetheless to draw up an evaluation of community councils for the short period during which they have been in existence.

The actual process of creation of the community councils provides a key to an understanding of their different roles. The people involved in their creation and the types of meeting (formal and informal) at which the councils were conceived provide valuable information about their role within their respective communities.

It is interesting to note that in three of the four areas visited, the idea of setting up a community council was initiated by an existing organization: the Conseil Économique in St-Félicien, the Ligue pour le Développement Social in Sherbrooke, and the Centre Social St-Pascal Inc. in St-Pascal. These organizations, whose main aim is to promote local development, soon realized the potential of community television, and so they assigned one or more of their members the task of

promoting community programming. At first it was a matter of making groups and organizations in the region aware of the existence of a community channel, and then of informing the general public of its role.

In other words, the appearance of community television in these areas did not take the population and existing groups by surprise. On the contrary, a campaign to make people aware of the existence of community television was begun even before the channel started operating. In Sherbrooke, for example, some people were asking questions about community programming a whole year before production began.

In Quebec City, the advent of community television did not cause much reaction among existing groups or the public in general. The task of defining the scope of community programming and making people aware of community television's role was undertaken by the staff of Télé-Cable de Québec Inc., which responsibility for the community channel. This situation is directly linked to the greater size of the city and other related factors that decrease citizen participation in activities of all types. The problem is even more serious in major urban centres such as Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver.

In the areas visited, the first sparks of interest in developing community television came mainly from outside the cable television system. In some cases, the first efforts were made from within by employees assigned to work on the community channel, and sometimes, in very small places, these efforts were initiated by the cable company owners (for example, St-Pascal de Kamouraska and St-Raymond de Portneuf). It is therefore difficult to provide an accurate answer to the question: Who is responsible for the creation of community councils?

It is easier, however, to pinpoint the factors which have favoured the creation of community councils. One might well ask why the first action taken by people interested in developing the community channel was to call a general meeting which, in most cases, led to the creation of a temporary coordinating body, which later became the community council. These meetings were attended by representatives from most organizations in the region and by private citizens interested in the development of community television. Those present at the meetings elected a committee to coordinate community programming. In St-Félicien, the cooperation of the owner of the cable television system had already happened, whereas in Sherbrooke, National Cablevision had not been officially approached at that point. In both cases, the first general meetings attracted a great many people, an indication of the interest aroused by community television.

The organizers of these community groups (which became increasingly structured after a few meetings) had a dual objective in mind. First, it appears that one of the prime reasons for setting up community councils was to provide broader access by the population to the community channel by publicizing its existence and role as much as possible, and by encouraging participation by the maximum number of groups and individuals.

Secondly, this objective of democratization was linked to an equally strong desire to head community television in the right direction from the very start.

The need for planning of this type was felt very keenly by the organizers, who seemed well aware of the problems community television would experience at the outset. Another of the major factors which prompted the creation of community councils was the prior awareness of the problems associated with the development of community television. By starting from an unstructured basis and then organizing themselves, the individuals and groups interested in community programming increased their capability for producing programmes, and at the same time shielded themselves more effectively from criticism on the nature of community programmes. These comments apply to all four of the regions visited, despite the appreciable differences in their various community councils.

The existing formats fall between two extremes. On the one hand, some community councils tend to be highly structured, grouping individuals and organizations in which the directors are officially appointed, and participation by all members is assured through different levels of representation. The justification for this format is that by including as many individuals and groups as possible, the community council is highly representative of the population served by the cable television company. Under it, a proposal for a community programme submitted by an individual or group must go through various stages of presentation and discussion before it can be approved.

Other community councils, for various reasons, seek greater spontaneity in the planning and carrying out of community programmes. One of the major concerns of proponents of this format is to avoid unwieldy structures which could stifle the dynamism of community television. This less formal structure, or more precisely, this informal organization of community councils, allows the councils to produce programmes more quickly, and enables people with little interest in sitting on a community council to work on programmes in which they are interested. This type of community council raises a number of interesting questions.

Although the advent of community television immediately caught the attention of a number of people whose enthusiasm has not waned, the same cannot be said for the general public. In several cases, community channel use has been largely haphazard in nature. In Quebec City, for example, a group of drama-school students produced a series of some ten programmes for children when they were studying children's theatre in their courses. Some department store employees involved in a strike which had been going on for several weeks produced a few information programmes on their situation. Parents in a school association prepared some programmes on cumulative student records when the Department of Education wanted to introduce this means of evaluating a student's performance throughout his scholastic career.

Topical events elicited in these people a sudden awareness and the desire to express their opinions on the specific points which concerned or at least interested them. We would not, for example, expect the individuals who made the programme on their strike to come back to do other programmes as long as they experienced no further labour disputes. We could cite dozens of cases in which individuals used cable television to express themselves on matters which affected them directly, and then were not heard from again. This reveals the transient yet intense nature of the factors which spur groups and individuals to action, and the importance of community television in informing citizens about the problems faced by certain sectors of the population.

In these cases, the people involved had something to make known at a specific time. Their expectations about community television were equally specific. It was simply a question of taking advantage of this special means of expression while at the same time respecting the rules laid down by community television regarding the availability of studio, staff, and equipment—all within a relatively short time. If such decisions had had to be made at the monthly meeting of the community assembly, it is highly likely that at least a couple of these programmes would never have appeared on the community channel. Moreover, if the promoters of the proposed programmes had had to attend the monthly meeting to explain and defend their plans, it is very probable that no programme would have ever reached the public.

If these people who wanted to use community television on one specific occasion were asked to become involved in it on a permanent basis they would probably refuse, some for reasons of temperament, others for lack of time. We would be mistaken, however, to think that these people feel indifferent toward community television. For many of them, it is enough to know that this means of expression is always available for them or their group to use, subject to a few rules regarding the necessary staff and equipment.

Quebec City's experiment, aimed at increasing spontaneous participation by the population, has generated great hope for community television in major urban centres, where the efforts made by programming directors to interest citizens in community programmes frequently have run into a wall of indifference. The community assembly format was not originally conceived in its present form. Rather, it was thought out and modified after a series of unsuccessful discussions, meetings, and efforts. It is the product of a realistic attitude based on an understanding of the community context; namely, the presence of a variety of individuals and groups having different ideologies and showing sporadic interest in community television, but volunteering to do a few programmes on specific topics if their efforts are guided, their proposals supported, and their opinions respected. In such a situation, it is the responsibility of the programming director, assisted by the community assembly, first to make the existence of

the community channel known, then to provide technical support (staff and equipment needed to produce high-quality programmes), and finally to ensure that the opposing party is heard in cases where it's necessary to ensure fairness. In addition, he must generally see that programmes do not contain remarks offensive to any race or religion; obscene, indecent, or blasphemous language; or incorrect or misleading news.

We believe that a second distinction can be added to the first, between, on the one hand, those community councils which have or seek power within the community, and, on the other hand, those community councils (assemblies would be more accurate) which want to stimulate and channel the enthusiasm of existing groups toward community television. These differences in the concept of the role of community councils, which are apt to influence the direction taken by community programming, are due both to the personalities of those responsible for creating the councils, and to the peculiarities of the locality concerned. From the very first meetings, these factors have nudged the development of community television in one or another of these directions.

There is no need to comment further on the innovative nature of community television in Canada. The situation is encouraging in some respects, but also has its difficulties for the people most closely involved in community television and who daily have to face the problems associated with its development. These individuals deserve admiration and respect for their perseverance and energy through all the various stages of the creation of community councils. It is good to note that their behind-the-scenes work has generally been carried out in a healthy atmosphere of frank discussion. This initial general conclusion is worth mentioning as an illustration of the positive attitude which exists toward community television, and of people's capacity for innovation coupled with respect for individuals' rights and established structures.

Of the four locations visited, Sherbrooke was the only one in which there were serious disputes. Is the Sherbrooke experiment therefore a failure? We do not think so. To claim otherwise would be to disregard two years' work promoting involvement and the participation of many individuals and groups in community television projects. The problems encountered in Sherbrooke had a beneficial effect in that they enabled people with different points of view to clarify their positions and to advance the debate surrounding the merits of community councils and the form they should take in a particular region.

One of the basic questions in all serious discussions on community councils concerns the role of community television in a given area. There are two distinct points of view on this subject. On the one hand, some people see community television as a microcosm of society, identical to the original in all respects. In their view, community programming is a mirror which should provide as accurate a reflection as possible of the larger society and should, consequently, allot time to the most influential groups in society (such as the

chamber of commerce) in order of their importance, and leave less time for community groups which are considered marginal.

Other people see community television as a medium more used as an agent of social change and favouring in particular those people and groups who have no way of making themselves heard, those who are largely passed over by the conventional communications media. It appears that in all areas, people closely associated with the development of community television (owners, programming directors, and citizens) fluctuate between these two extremes.

The concept of community councils varies greatly depending on which position one tends toward. Opinion is divided about the sorts of groups which should belong to community councils and about the latter's role vis-à-vis the cable television licensee (whether it should have decision-making or simply advisory powers).

The more controversial of these two points is the one concerning the representativeness of community councils. Their representativeness cannot be assessed without a consensus on evaluation criteria, and it seems that such a consensus will never be attained until there is more agreement on the role of community television in a given area. As a result, discussions on this subject are often fruitless. Surely it is unrealistic to expect consensus on such a fundamental point as the importance citizens attach to the instruments of social change. This sort of question goes much beyond the scope of community television yet lies at the very root of its daily problems of development.

Aside from the questions we have just mentioned, it must be recognized that in certain places (particularly the major urban centres) the idea of setting up a community council completely representative of the population is idealistic and somewhat naïve. Simply listing all the existing organizations (in large centres such as Montreal or Quebec City), never mind their scope and goals, is a considerable feat. To expect, in addition, that representatives of each of these groups should meet around the same table like one big happy family to work out a programme reflecting all their concerns, seems to us not only unrealistic but even undesirable. Attempts to organize such superstructures in major cities are probably pointless and doomed to failure.

Many of the groups which are to be found in our larger cities thrive on conflict; for some, like landlords and tenants' associations, the struggle against the influence and activities of opposing groups is a way of life. Why not simply try to assemble a few individuals who will

ensure that everyone participates when necessary and will in general try to encourage participation, rather than trying to channel every group's participation into a rigid pyramidal structure which might well stifle spontaneous involvement in community programmes? Sound judgment must be used in deciding on the format of the community council, and people should be wary of trying to apply borrowed formulas.

Under the law, the cable licensee is responsible for the content of the programmes broadcast. Consequently, the powers of the community councils are determined largely by working agreements which are reached between the council and the licensee for the purpose of promoting community television. It is difficult to make any comment on either of the roles adopted by community councils on the basis of observations in the places visited. We saw such variety, depending on the intentions of the heads of community councils, the size of community served and the importance attached to the agreements signed, that we feel an analysis of what actually takes place should be given more weight than the significance attached by some to notions such as "decision-making" and "advisory."

One of the most basic questions raised by the existence of community councils is the role of cable television operators in the broadcasting system. Care must be taken to ensure that the licensee is involved in the development of community television, but also that the opinions of citizens who take part in programming are respected, by making them responsible for their own programmes.

Is there not a danger of highly structured community councils becoming merely a traditional form of citizen participation grafted onto a totally new mode of expression which, as a result, could be harmful to community television unless some genuine adaptation is worked out?

Although a real effort has been made in most places to give community television the impetus it needs to develop its vast potential, it is also important to provide it with mechanisms of participation adapted to community requirements, to ensure access for as many people as possible. A serious gap could develop between, on the one hand, the type of community programmes broadcast and on the other hand, the means of participation available to the public, if both of these questions are not tackled simultaneously.

The need for inventing new forms of participation adapted to the role of community television is the main finding of our study on community councils. In our view, this is the greatest challenge facing community television in the years ahead.

Resources in the active community

Stephen Callary

Guidelines for cataloguing resources in a "model" community are predicated on a very simple premise—begin at the source. Manufacturers of portable video equipment have two major customers, government and private enterprise, who use this equipment mainly for educational or instructional and industrial (i.e. surveillance) purposes.

The most effective technique which can be used in compiling a comprehensive list of potentially available equipment is to request a "customer list" from manufacturers. Our experience is that such a list will be provided, in most cases, without objection.

Once one has identified who owns video equipment (and in what quantity), it is necessary to undertake the somewhat arduous task of contacting each owner in order to determine the lending policies, if any, which may exist. During this search, some of your inquiries will end rather quickly as the equipment will be either readily available or not available at all.

In other cases, the lack of policy or at any rate the absence of a clear access policy in relation to video equipment will undoubtedly precipitate both private and public debate on the utilization of these resources in "off hours." It should be remembered, after all, that a good deal of this equipment has been purchased with public funds. You will find that your queries will undoubtedly be the catalyst for a re-examination of existing lending policies which cannot help but significantly improve community video participation.

But before you begin your search, there are a number of preliminary preparations which should be made.

THE REASON FOR YOUR CALL

You will be visiting or calling upon busy people. You should be prepared to explain your project in a concise and specific way and, furthermore, you should be able and willing to demonstrate a basic notion of media applicability to your objective. It goes without saying that you must evidence a reasonably thorough knowledge of how to utilize the equipment requested.

You should have a good idea of your contact's function and the role of his organization. A link between your respective interests is often imperative.

A SPECIFIC REQUEST

You should decide in advance what it is that you require. Is it information, or a particular piece of equipment? If equipment, at what date and for how long? As borrower will you accept a donation or an arrangement other than a loan? Will you require technical help?

You can often secure the cooperation of a reluctant lender by acknowledging that you are not necessarily an expert in the video field and by accepting advice or additional assistance which he may provide as a *sine qua non* of lending you equipment. Shortly stated, be humble and flexible.

You should begin as if access to all equipment is closed. Therefore, your first encounter will be very important and will probably determine the kind of cooperation you will receive. Research the organization thoroughly and choose the proper contact within it. Be prepared to explain those benefits of the project which can potentially accrue to the organization.

Guidelines

MANUFACTURERS, DISTRIBUTORS, AND DEALERS

The first step is to contact the manufacturer, his agent, his distributor, and/or the retail sales, rental, and service dealers in the region. They will most likely know who is interested in video, who owns equipment, rents it, and lends it since they either sold it or currently service it. The dealers can also inform you about their own rental policy and about who gives video courses in your area. This information could prove quite useful especially should you find a sponsor willing to rent the equipment for you, or who would be amenable to making a donation in order that you might buy the equipment.

Principal dealers of video equipment can be located in the white pages of your phone book or in the yellow pages under "Videotape Equipment Rentals"; "Television Supplies and Parts"; "Television Systems and Equipment-Closed Circuit"; etc.

CABLE TELEVISION OPERATORS

The next step is to visit your local cable television operator. Many operate a community channel and they may have portable video equipment and editing facilities which are available to anyone producing programmes over that channel. They may also have a fair idea of who else in the community owns equipment, since quite often pre-recorded programming is used. They will likely be a valuable source of information for what resources exist in the community.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

As much of the video equipment currently in use has been bought with public funds, another area of inquiry can be the many government departments and agencies, and diverse community organizations and institutions which are supported through public taxes and donations. As their *raison d'être* is to serve the community, you will be more likely to find accessible equipment here than in any other place.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

By far the prime consumers of video equipment in the public sector are the provincial departments of education. At the local level in Quebec, the "legal owner" of such equipment is the school board, and this is where you should start. As each board has its own policy, your inquiries may occasionally turn up a well-defined system of loaning equipment to members of the community.

Most school boards have also established adult education services. These programmes are now beginning to use video and many offer courses in community media. Because of the less structured approach of these courses, you should check with the continuing education administrator about access to this equipment. In terms of staff contacts, most schools will have a video coordinator in charge of equipment, and this is the person you should contact.

Universities and colleges all have well-equipped media labs and programmes, with a wide range of policies regarding loans to the community. You will have to visit these institutions in order to determine their access policies. The faculties most likely to have equipment are communications, journalism, English, education, library science, medicine, physical education, and science as well as the communications or media centre, the student union, and the library. These visits will provide you with an opportunity of meeting many educators and administrators in the field who can be an invaluable source of information not obtainable elsewhere.

PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

In Quebec, the Department of Communications has a regional office in Montreal which may loan equipment. There may also be some related provincial agencies, such as film boards, educational television or broadcasting authorities, and film libraries which might provide access to their video equipment. Furthermore, there may be an institution such as Vidéographe in Montreal, a non-profit corporation which is devoted to promoting the use of video in the community. It is quite likely that comparable organizations exist or are evolving in other parts of Canada.

Other provincial government departments such as the departments of the Secretary of State, Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Highways and Transportation, Fish and Game, Lands and Forests, Natural Resources, Justice, and Immigration and such agencies as hydro and other resource development corporations located in your

province may also own their own equipment. Generally speaking, one will have reasonable success in borrowing equipment from these departments when your project goals correspond with their respective responsibilities.

Most of the information you require may be obtained by phoning the information offices of the various departments found in the white pages of the phone book under "Government of (province)."

FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

The federal government also has many departments and agencies which, through regional offices, may lend video equipment. Further information can be obtained from the National Film Board.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

The fourth most likely source of equipment at the public level is the municipal or regional government. For example, such services as recreation, parks, library, welfare, public works, and police may use video equipment and might be in a position to help you obtain access to it depending on your project. You should visit the offices of these various services whose locations you will find listed in the white pages of the phone book under "Municipality of (place)," "Town of (place)," "City of (place)," or "Urban Community of (place)."

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

Other likely sources of equipment in the community are hospitals, the private agencies grouped under the Federated Appeal, the labor unions, and those agencies and non-profit corporations who sponsor social development projects. Such organizations as the YMCA, Kiwanis, Lions, Rotary, and the Chamber of Commerce often act as sponsors of video projects and may put you in touch with groups working with video, or offer their assistance to your project in some other way. Additionally, in the public sector, one should not overlook the various churches, temples, and synagogues, their related religious and ethnic associations, cultural centres and clubs, and private foundations and endowment funds. As well as ensuring the completeness of your inventory, contact with these groups will provide you with an interesting overview of the composition and work of the myriad forces and influences active in your community.

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

In the private enterprise sector, other than the cable television companies and the video equipment dealers previously mentioned, your inquiries should bring you into contact with such firms as film making and distributing companies, television and radio stations, newspaper and magazine publishers, advertising agencies, theatrical companies, and other media oriented organizations. They often use video in their daily operations

and may have equipment to lend, or information relating to access.

There are also firms who use video basically in employee training courses, and whose public relations departments might sponsor your project. Arrangements whereby the firms rent equipment for you, or make a monetary donation toward renting equipment, along with any loans of equipment which they might be willing to make, can be negotiated. The most likely firms to contact would be large companies at their head office in the following fields:

telephone and telecommunications

banking

insurance

resource exploitation (mining and smelting, oil and gas, chemicals, wood, and pulp and paper)

transportation (automobiles, railways, and airlines)

large consumer retail firms in such areas as foods (i.e., supermarkets), clothing (i.e. department stores), and merchants' associations and shopping centre management groups

manufacturing (specifically household appliances, building supplies, foodstuffs, textiles, clothing and apparel, drugs and cosmetics).

In all of the above cases, the head office's public relations department would be your initial starting place. And since not every community in Canada contains a head office of one of the country's large commercial enterprises, we suggest that you use the same approach with all of the largest employers in your region.

INDIVIDUALS

Finally, you should consult such publications as *Interface*, the *Video Exchange Directory*, *Radical Software*, the Challenge for Change newsletter (called *Access*), and other video exchange listings which will provide you with the names of the individuals and groups who are actively involved in the video field in your community.

Using video resources

The comments which are made in this part are a summary of the author's observations regarding the utilization of video resources in the Montreal area.

The results of our research into the ownership of portable video equipment in the Montreal region are accurately reflected in the following statistic: since 1969, approximately 1200 half-inch units have been sold by the major equipment manufacturers, 95% to two consumers: a variety of institutions engaged in educational instruction, and large corporations. We were repeatedly assured that these statistics for the past four years reflect the distribution of all sales previous to 1969.¹

In consequence, first one must assume that less than 5% of the half-inch units in the Montreal region are accessible to the individual. In reality, the percentage is somewhat higher.² In fact, portable equipment may be borrowed from many institutions depending on who you are, what you're doing, why you're doing it and, most importantly, when you're doing it. An individual, for example, currently attending an institution of higher learning in the greater Montreal area will normally have good access to portable equipment. Ironically, that same individual, upon graduation, will likely find his source dried up and virtually no chance of securing video equipment.

As regards the borrowing/lending of portapaks owned by educational institutions, one may safely state a recurring pattern: there is no open and clear policy on access to equipment. Equipment is secured on a helter-skelter, ad hoc basis. What is available today may not be available tomorrow. More often than not, a clear explanation of a rejection is rarely provided.

Large corporations, as one would expect, are less receptive to lending equipment, particularly to individuals who are not employees of that given corporation. The primary objective in the use of video equipment in a corporate framework is to provide modern and effective educational instruction for a firm's employees. It is our experience that it is very rare indeed that such equipment is lent even to employees.

Underlying the above mentioned comments are three fundamental problems:

- Since there is far from a surplus of equipment in the Montreal region, in most cases available equipment is in constant use.
- A half-inch video unit costs about \$1800 to \$2000, depending on which manufacturer it is purchased from. Such a cost is prohibitive for most individuals. Moreover, a renting cost of approximately \$75/day is equally prohibitive.³
- Portable video equipment is fragile. By its very nature, it is constantly in motion. The continued transportation and use of such equipment by different persons inevitably causes wear and tear, significantly increasing maintenance costs to the lender.

The foregoing synopsis undoubtedly indicates that video resources in our community are scarce and rarely available to the individual.

One further point, however, should be made. Aside from the problem of clearly articulated borrowing/lending procedures, one is struck by the few groups in Montreal whose primary function it is to make community video a live and viable activity. Vidéographe certainly has a clear and open policy on access to equipment, though projects must conform to certain of its internal criteria.

Equipment access is certainly not the only problem retarding the growth of community television in Montreal but it is by far and away the most important.

Footnotes

1. Sales statistics provided by Sony of Canada Ltd. and Panasonic of Canada Ltd.
2. It is impossible to cite a precise figure, for reasons to be explained shortly.
3. A number of distributors are prepared to rent equipment to individuals who can adduce proper evidence of familiarity with the equipment. The renting business is minimal and, from our experience, will not grow. Distributors do not wish to increase the volume of this business because of the high overhead associated with the maintenance of equipment after each rental. Furthermore, there is no intention of decreasing the daily rate to encourage growth in this field.

Community television's impact

An interview with André Chagnon

Mr. Chagnon is president of Vidéotron Ltée. This firm holds five cable television licences in the Quebec municipalities of Buckingham, Masson; Gatineau, Templeton, Pointe-Gatineau; Mont-Laurier; Beloeil, McMasterville, Otterburn Park, St-Basile, St-Hilaire, Ste-Julie; St-Jérôme, Lafontaine, and St-Antoine.

Q. You used a number of methods to try to find out the extent of your audience, its preferences, its needs, and its reactions to your programming. Could you tell us something about your methods and the results you obtained?

A. We used telephone, door-to-door, and mail surveys, and we organized informal meetings and discussions. We wanted to find out the extent of our audience, but our goal was to find out not simply if 50% or 75% of the subscribers watched certain programmes regularly, but rather if people even knew about these programmes and if so, whether they had any interest in them. In other words, we wanted to know "who" watched rather than "how many" watched.

We're still interested in knowing just how big our audience is. In Buckingham, for example, we received 174 replies to a questionnaire sent out to 350 of our 900 subscribers, which means that we got roughly a 50% reply. Nearly 90% of our respondents were aware of the existence of the community channel, and 63% tuned in to it more than once a week; 21% of our respondents had previously taken part in community programming, either over the telephone or in our studios. I proposed to the group that runs our community television that I would help defray their operating costs, if they would look for other financing themselves. I promised to match them dollar for dollar up to a total of \$4000.

Q. You discovered that your programmes appeal to specific audiences and that they don't reach all your subscribers at the same time.

A. That's true. *Life* and *Post*, for example, have disappeared, to be replaced by a multitude of more specialized magazines. I believe that our programming, which right now is broadcast over a single channel but will eventually go out over 30 channels, will have to be made up of such specialized little "magazines," focused on specific interests. And in Gatineau, in fact, we have already begun to do this with a certain amount of "block-programming." During the day, for example, we have time-slots when the programme content is addressed to women, the elderly, etc.

Q. You now produce and distribute to your subscribers a magazine entitled "Mieux vivre chez nous" (A better life for our community). What is its purpose?

A. Its chief purpose is to promote the local channel. Our surveys, although not scientific, did reveal to us that our

subscribers don't know about our programmes. We use the time and weather channel to advertise them, by putting information on the drum, but we found out that our messages were having little effect. In the course of a door-to-door survey in Beloeil and Gatineau, we asked our subscribers where they got information about our programme schedules. I'll never forget one lady's reply: "I ask the neighbour"!

To help overcome this lack of information on our programming, we have tried to promote it in the local weeklies. But we're faced with a dual problem: first, the local paper is just glanced at, then thrown away; second, not all the weeklies will let us publish our schedule free, which means extra advertising costs of about \$220 a month for a single page. Our own little magazine, which is financed in part by advertising, carries a monthly deficit of \$250. But contrary to the local papers, it has the advantage of being kept for frequent use. It carries a schedule which in fact has few details about programming, since we often make the decision to present a special programme on the very day of its broadcast.

At first, publication of the magazine was looked after entirely by people on our staff. But we've begun to get some local committees to take charge of it. Our magazine deals with a variety of subjects of local interest, such that it too has become a local medium just like community television. People in the community can use it in the same way and for the same purposes as community television. As outside committees take it over, we'll be having less and less to do with it. The editorials we're writing now, for example, are a tool for community use, and it should be up to the community to write them.

Q. You spoke earlier of the different "unscientific" surveys you undertook. Could you be more explicit about them?

A. We sought information in different ways: through the mail, by means of a questionnaire and stamped return envelope sent out with our bills. We also sought information door-to-door and over the telephone. As far as the postal questionnaire was concerned, the subscribers only had to tick off their answers. It was relatively simple. This type of survey has its use and it provided us with quantitative information in particular. One disadvantage is that it offers little room for comment. Moreover, the people who prepared the survey were disappointed by the small number of replies they received. When you receive your telephone or electricity bill, you don't always read the little blurb from Bell or Hydro, and it's just the same for questionnaires.

The door-to-door method, which gets to subscribers and non-subscribers both, seems a more useful technique. Our enquiries showed that despite all efforts, the

majority of the public don't know what local or community television is. For most people, television is entertainment, and they find it hard to think of it as anything else. They find the idea of their being involved in this medium in a personal way very strange. People asked us: "What's going to be on?" "Will there be films? stars? shows?" They look on it as just another conventional TV station. The process of sensitizing people to this new way of using television is long and drawn out.

Telephone calls from viewers constitute another way of keeping tabs on subscribers' feelings. Our policy is to have a phone-in period for every show with an invited guest. The actual number of calls is a preliminary indication of the interest aroused by the show and some calls provide comments on the show itself. At other times, the programming directors solicit comment on what is broadcast. I think this kind of feedback is useful. Because of our preconceptions, we sometimes tend to think that certain of our programmes are not appreciated by the public, whereas in fact they are.

An anecdote comes to mind which illustrates what I've just said. One of the programming directors balked at broadcasting the tape of a play written and performed by a group of 12- to 14-year-old schoolchildren. Nevertheless, at the children's insistence, he decided to go ahead with it. He asked for comments from the audience and to his great surprise they were all favourable, from both parents and children. He even received calls asking him to replay the show, which of course he did.

Q. Did your surveys identify with any precision the social "levels" of the people that watch the local channel?

A. The results of our surveys don't provide any exact answers to that question. All I can say is that it's obvious that all our subscribers don't watch all our programming, because it's "specialized" (for the elderly, women, children, etc.). We were able to identify groups by age, sex, etc. But there is perhaps a lack of programming directed at the "bourgeoisie." This group, moreover, seems to show little interest in the preparation of programmes. The middle-class person is difficult to motivate: even if a jar of coffee has gone up 10 cents, he'll buy it anyway. He won't come in to make a programme on the increase in the cost of living. It would be interesting if he did, since he would make different programmes, because his knowledge, his experience, and above all his needs are different. Those people in the "less fortunate" classes produce programmes with a view to getting something. The "privileged" classes might make programmes to protect what they've got. In any case, people of this class would undoubtedly be more interested in programmes that dealt with subjects like contracts, wills, insurance, etc.

Q. You've spoken to us of block-programming directed at women and the elderly. In the light of your experience, could you describe how long it takes for an audience to develop and how its participation comes about?

A. Gatineau has had its community channel for six years. The people of Gatineau are therefore aware of its existence, so that if they have something to communicate, they'll use it for this purpose. Block-programming has been running there since December 1973 and the programming director is very taken by the extent of participation involved. But we must remember that the members of this community have had six years to get used to our channel. In St-Jérôme, on the other hand, where the cable system is not yet in operation, it will take a certain length of time to build an audience and elicit participation in the context of a format like block-programming. Again, in Beloeil, probably because of the kind of broadcasts that we offer, it has been possible to build an audience fairly quickly. Last year we presented tapes of junior hockey games, which were very successful. Our staff received many calls asking them to rebroadcast the games the same week. We had decided in this area to concentrate our efforts on broadcasting local sports, which doesn't prevent members of the community from producing other programmes of their choice. In Beloeil, we announced the times of the hockey broadcasts on posters displayed on the company vans. We also included information with our bills, not only about the broadcast times but about the game's themselves, because the broadcasts were prerecorded. We mentioned them too in our magazine. As for the local papers, advertising was limited because we couldn't get free space, as I already mentioned. Of course we also use the time and weather information drum.

The president of the league was very favourably disposed to this kind of rebroadcast of games. It hasn't really increased attendance at the games themselves, but many more people now watch them thanks to community television. We also decided to solicit comments from the public between periods, while the tapes were being changed. The game itself lasts only an hour, but the programme might go on for three or even four hours, depending on how much time is given to calls. The people themselves determined how much time would be given to discussions with the players, the instructors or the president of the league. I confess that I was sceptical at first: who would want to see a hockey game whose outcome was already decided? It takes away all the suspense of the closing minutes. It was conceivable that, at the worst, there might be interest in the broadcast of excerpts of a game. But people wanted the whole thing, even though the tapings were done with a portapak, and despite the problems with contrast because of the white ice. Many viewers watched these games until late at night. Once, at two in the morning, while broadcasting a game, the programming director decided to cut the sound and ask the viewers to telephone in simply to let us know they were watching the game. He received between 110 and 130 calls in the few minutes following his announcement!

Q. Have the broadcast of these games and the use of "Selecto-TV" had an effect on audience size and on participation of the public in programmes?

A. Any way you look at it, success always breeds success. On the one hand, the subscribers who were interested enough to follow the hockey games will undoubtedly be tempted to look at other items in our programming. On the other hand, they realize that our medium reaches certain people, which will perhaps motivate them to utilize it themselves in order to communicate to the community something which is important to them.

We don't think that a particular programme should necessarily become a series just because it's successful. Maximizing our programme hours is far from being the goal of the Vidéotron company. Community channels which feature long hours of programming are too often simply after continuous broadcasting for its own sake. What finally happens is that people run out of ideas and have nothing new to say. I think the ideal thing is to have the medium available to people when they need it.

Q. I believe that in the majority of the municipalities which you serve, you broadcast municipal council meetings, live or on tape. Have these broadcasts had an important impact on the audience?

A. In Beloeil, a survey showed that this programming was reaching 70% of our subscribers. It's obvious that this has an impact on civic life, because it gets citizens involved in municipal decisions. There's no doubt that this also has a direct impact on the council and, if my memory serves me well, on the adoption of certain resolutions. Because the public has a chance to see its elected representatives at work, the politician's role takes on a new cast. People are in a much better position to judge their representatives when they can watch them in action. They not only understand their functions better, but they can also size up their qualifications and their abilities. One can expect that a politician in such a position, who is tempted to look out for his own interests rather than those of this community, will mull over what he has to say before opening his mouth. If the politicians of a municipality are in the habit of making decisions behind closed doors and then having a semblance of a public meeting whose purpose is merely to rubber-stamp these decisions, then coverage of such meetings, along with phone-ins, will expose it pretty quickly.

Q. Has the broadcast of municipal council meetings had any immediate effect on the public?

A. The mayor of Beloeil revealed his own reactions to me. He pointed out that people used to criticize him on the basis of unsound arguments, because of a lack of information. He says that people are now arguing in a more constructive way. The mayor consented without hesitation to the idea of a telephone forum in which he solicits comments, suggestions, and criticisms from the public in order to help the council in its work. Because the citizens are more sensitive to the workings of the municipal administration, they react in a more informed fashion and are no longer given to helter-skelter criticism. Now when the mayor meets the public, it is no

longer simply in order to pass on information, but to discuss with them what is in store at the next council meeting.

Q. A number of individuals and various social and cultural groups have participated in or produced many programmes. Is it your feeling that such programmes have brought about changes?

A. It's not easy for me to answer that question because these developments don't always lend themselves to analysis. Such programmes have undoubtedly been a source of change, which is indeed one of the aims of community television. These changes are not always obvious or measurable. I can scarcely imagine that change hasn't come about because of community television. One thing is certain: people know each other, and their milieu, better.

Let's take the case of the Beloeil School Board. The trustees were under the impression that the parents wanted a regulation passed for their benefit because of trouble they were supposedly having with their children's dress (jeans) and grooming (long hair). The trustees decided to vote a regulation to deal with the problem. The students wanted to protest. They therefore went to the local channel in order to air their objections to the new regulation, and the format they chose was an open-line show. The next day, the trustees came to defend their regulation on a two- or three-hour show during which they received numerous phone calls from parents. Finally, the School Board decided to rescind its regulation. Community television thus allowed those concerned to take the problem in hand, air it, discuss it, and resolve it.

In a second municipality, a lady made a programme in order to protest certain bureaucratic delays. Script in hand and in front of a camera for the first time, this lady reminded the audience that a sum of \$5000 voted quite some time previously for the preparation of a tennis court had not yet been used. She invited the council to explain its reasons for the delay. Result: work began on it the following week.

In my opinion, the important thing is to catch the public at the right moment. Speed is of the essence, because people who have something to say, like the lady I described, can't take six months to prepare their programme. Presentation and production value have to take second place. Think of the problems created for us by most series. Early on people have something to say, but sooner or later their material will run out. Then presentation becomes important and the need for more sophisticated tools is felt—form wins out over content.

The most important thing is to avoid rigid programming. Nothing disturbs me more than watching a conventional TV show which ends just as the interview is getting interesting. Community television must be flexible enough to allow one programme to be cancelled in order to extend another which turns out to be more interesting than expected.

The conventional TV studio does not foster spontaneity, because it is an unfamiliar environment. In this sense

the portapak is an extraordinary tool, for it allows one to move freely and to get to people in their own homes. On the other hand, the use of this taping technique does not allow for a phone-in set up. Two-way cable will be a step in the right direction. Every home could become a studio, merely by plugging in a camera. One would then have as many studios as subscribers. The studio could also be a shopping centre, a street, a factory, etc. People would no longer come to the studio; the studio would come to them.

In Gatineau right now, we're producing programmes with a portapak in collaboration with seven groups of elderly people (from homes, senior citizens' groups, etc.). However, many old people are not able to get out. With two-way cable, it would be possible to organize TV get-togethers between several points (i.e., several homes), and switching would be taken care of by the director working from the studio.

Q. Apart from the social changes of which you've been speaking, have you noticed any impact on the level of the individual?

A. Yes. I remember some time ago when we were doing some Selecto-TV in collaboration with the NFB, we presented a documentary dealing with childbirth.* Our documentary presentation was accompanied by a telephone hot-line. A father about 50 years old called us to say that this film had completely changed his conception of mothers and women in general. He told us: "If I had seen that film before or at the beginning of my marriage, I would have seen my wife in a totally different light." A young girl phoned us a few days later to tell us that she had seen the documentary in the presence of several teen-age couples. She explained that the behaviour of the boys had changed.

* For details on Selecto-TV, see the list of terms.

Some NFB directors who were there at the time confessed their surprise at the spontaneity, openness, and lack of embarrassment with which people expressed themselves over the phone, compared to similar experiences they had had with other participatory screenings.

Not all the possibilities for telephone/cable hook-ups which would allow one person to communicate with others have been fully studied or exploited. For example, someone moves to a new town where he doesn't know anyone. He's a bridge fan and would like to meet some other people who share his interest. He therefore takes to the community channel and uses it to try to find some partners. That's just one example. There are endless other possibilities. Community television is not just a means for dealing with big problems that affect the whole community. It can also deal with the smaller problems of our bridge-player. I remember a similar case. Some chess-players came to the studio to ask us for three hours of air time to organize chess games between experts in the studio and players at home. People in this group explained that many chess-players have trouble finding partners.

Or again, a father spends his Saturdays near the ski slopes looking after his children and doesn't ski himself. He could use the community channel to get together a group to rent a bus, hire an instructor for the group, and so on, which wouldn't be possible on an individual basis.

The individual is often faced with difficulties that he cannot solve alone. He can, if he is given the chance, appeal to the human resources offered by the community in which he lives and works. The community may have the solution to his problems. It is simply a matter of getting organized. Community television can serve both the community and the individual as a channel of communication.

Community programming in the political process

Gordon Galbraith

One of the major effects the development of mass communication has had in this century has been to reduce the relative visibility of the territorially-based political community. This is not to say that the structural significance of such communities was reduced; only their visibility was lessened. It is a question of scale; issues were developed on a national scale, political gossip was dispensed globally, and the general focus of political attention shifted to a universal plane. All of this was occurring with political institutions still rooted in geography. Even while political struggles were being fought on a national or global stage, the building blocks of our system of representative government remained fixed in the decreasingly visible territorial communities of residence.

Now, with the arrival of what some scholars call a "tertiary specialized stage" of media development, sub-communities of all types including territorially based ones have once again become more visible. Nowhere is this clearer than in the general disintegration of mass-circulation magazines, but the trend is apparent elsewhere. The arrival of cable television, and the proliferation of available television channels, can only accelerate this process. In short, the electronic media are becoming specialized.

Cable television's community access channel can act to restore visibility to the territorially-based community and can significantly alter the ways in which our political institutions affect our daily lives. The political value of the access channel lies in three of its characteristics: that it is an access channel; that it is a communication channel for territorial communities, on which so much political life is based; and that it fits in with the life style of a society oriented to the use of the electronic media. It can be a useful tool for both politicians and public, and for the interaction of the two.

At this point it is necessary to adopt two definitions. By "the public" is meant that set of individuals who are only periodically and occasionally interested in politics, and then only in a limited range of issues. By "the politician" is meant a smaller set of persons with a continuing professional or semi-professional interest in a wide range of political issues. Of course, many would argue that this distinction is an undesirable one; perhaps so, but that is an ideological position, not an analytical one. The terms are used here descriptively and analytically.

From the point of view of "the public," the political usefulness of the community access channel is in its potential as a tool for focusing on, and structuring interest in, particular local issues. In the current age, merely getting attention for many issues is frequently an insuperable barrier to their satisfactory resolution. But the availability of portable VTR equipment and access

to a community television channel make it possible to provide an orderly and structured presentation of local problems. In an urban environment, a local problem might be an emerging pattern of petty crime; in a rural setting, it could be a threatened re-zoning of farm land or the planning of a new highway. In some cases, the researching of one issue will lead to the discovery of an unrelated problem—the investigation of the petty crime wave might disclose, for example, that a particular neighbourhood had a high percentage of elderly people unable to shop conveniently and economically because of poorly arranged bus routes. The point is that the community access channel can help people in territorial communities (like an urban neighbourhood) to discover and define their common problems.

None of this should be taken to imply that the community access channel is being touted as a replacement for more traditional modes of collective political action. It should be thought of as a supplementary tool for organizing and crystallizing public opinion, much as mass television is an agent for the crystallization—some would say manipulation—of public opinion on a national or global scale. The idea should be to integrate the technology and the political process, to link it to other forms of action.

Take, for example, a very traditional political format: the community meeting. This institution can be linked to the new technology in a number of ways, which can make use not only of the new tools but can alter the old institution as well. The access channel can be used to prepare the community for the coming meeting, by, for example, presentation of one or more pre-meeting programmes which set out the main lines of the problem to be discussed, and the possible alternative courses of action. The meeting itself could be recorded and replayed in an edited or complete form, as a type of "electronic minutes." In this way, the meeting itself becomes part of a process of action.

Similar possibilities exist for another traditional political institution, the local political party. Although political parties are mainly thought of as being organized to carry on political warfare at the national or provincial level, the fact is that they are deeply rooted in the territorially-based local community. That political parties are more often associated with electoral politics frequently obscures their very real existence between elections.

An election campaign is really only the surfacing and intensification of the continuous, ongoing activity of the political parties. In recognition of this fact, some community access channels have made time available to the local parties on a continuing basis even when there is no election underway. In most cases, however, the parties have treated this as an opportunity to carry

their cases to the general public. What the political parties have not fully grasped is that the community channel could give them a chance to overcome some of their problems of internal communication at the local level. In spite of all that has been uttered and written about the "media-ization" of politics, the fact is that people, organized into spirited, motivated teams, remain at the heart of the electoral process.

The idea of political programming on the community channel should not be to produce many little copies of "The Nation's Business" (the CBC Sunday telecasts by political parties), but should instead be programming by and for political activists of all partisan persuasions. Notwithstanding the previous crude distinction drawn between "the politicians" and "the public," it must be remembered that there are many degrees of political interest. Partisan programming that is pitched to a more complex level than that of the conventional mass media would work to the benefit of both the political parties and the democratic process.

The new portability of video equipment makes possible the public screening, and hence the wider circulation, of local party meetings hitherto attended by only a few of the more intensely interested citizens. A party telecast on Tuesday could explore the issues to be discussed at the annual meeting on Thursday, say, with interviews of those seeking to be elected to the local party executive, while the following party telecast could be an edited or unedited reprise of the meeting itself: "electronic minutes" again. It is this sort of interaction between the party organizations and the new technology which could invigorate Canadian political life, once the parties grasp the possibilities.

The existence of federal and provincial wings of the same political party can complicate partisan broadcasting. In the conventional media, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation provides time to the federal parties on the national network ("The Nation's Business") and to the provincial parties on province-wide networks ("Provincial Affairs"). But at the local level no such easy solutions are possible. In any given locality a political party is likely to have both federal and provincial constituency organizations. The relations between the two organizations of the same party, in the same locality, can range from complete identity of personnel and purpose to outright hostility. So there might occasionally arise the question of exactly who is responsible for the content of partisan programming. It might be useful, therefore, for the community channel operators to insist that each party designate a representative or a committee for the purpose of planning programmes.

At election times, the party programmes on the community channels could be a useful forum for exposing the views of the various aspirants for the party's nomination to the federal parliament or the provincial legislature.

Nominations are usually decided upon at party meetings called for that purpose. Although voting rules vary greatly throughout the country, most such meetings are very open, sometimes requiring only a small membership fee paid at the door. Local constituency organizations are usually pleased at the prospect of a hotly contested nomination, since that guarantees an interesting meeting, a larger turnout, and an expansion of the party's contacts within the community. It is not so widely realized, but the local nomination process is as important in determining the make-up of our parliaments and legislatures as the electoral process itself. Yet the nomination process is less understood and less exposed to public scrutiny than most other parts of our political system. By integrating itself into this activity, the community channels could assist the parties in their goal of involving as many citizens as possible in their activities, while at the same time performing an important public service.

Partisan programming on the community channel raises some questions not normally found in other types of cablecasting. These are: which groups are to be considered as legitimate political parties? and how is time to be divided among them? The answers are simpler than they may seem at first glance.

Offering programme time to political parties does not mean that the cablecaster incurs an obligation thereby to provide programmes for each and every group which calls itself a political party. There are no completely firm rules to govern this situation, but a few guiding principles are generally accepted. In general, a group can be considered as a recognized political party if it has representation in either the Federal Parliament or the provincial legislatures. The Federal Parliament has evolved rules and procedures which have established four groups—the Progressive Conservative Party, the New Democratic Party, the Social Credit Party, and the Liberal Party—as recognized political parties. It should be kept in mind that they are so recognized in every part of Canada, regardless of their strength or weakness in particular areas. Some of the provincial legislatures have established similar procedures; for example, in Manitoba a group must have the support of five members of the legislature to be recognized as a political party.

The matter of dividing time among the political parties is a little more complicated, but not greatly so. The Broadcasting Act requires only "equitable" divisions of available time. It is of some importance to remember that this does not necessarily mean *equal* time for each group. Precedents exist for interpreting this requirement to mean either the equal sharing of time between all the parties, or sharing according to some proportional formula taking account of the varying strength of parties. In general, the public broadcasting system (the CBC) has favoured the latter approach, and the private broadcasters the former.

The CRTC and public participation

Barry Kiefl and Nancy Wright

The Canadian Radio-Television Commission (CRTC) administers the Broadcasting Act which was enacted on 1 April 1968. The Commission was established by the terms of the Act as an "independent public authority" to "regulate and supervise all aspects of the Canadian broadcasting system." The Commission is comprised of five full-time commissioners (the Executive Committee) and ten part-time commissioners drawn from all regions of the country. Appointed by the Governor-in-Council for terms of seven years, the five-member Executive Committee is composed of the CRTC Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and three commissioners. The part-time commissioners are appointed for a term not exceeding five years.

The powers of the Commission include the authority to prescribe classes of broadcasting licences and to establish regulations applicable to all licence holders in the areas of programme standards; allocating of broadcasting time; supervising the character of advertising and the amount of time which may be devoted to advertising and partisan political broadcasting; the operations of broadcast networks; and other related matters.

Commission effectiveness in any or all of the above areas relies more often on the voluntary co-operation of licensees in carrying out the policies of the Commission than on the making and policing of regulations.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Broadcasting Committee's *Report* (the Fowler Report, 1965) preceded the formation of the CRTC and the enactment of the 1968 Broadcasting Act. In their report, the Committee defined the powers of the "single" authority that was to regulate broadcasting: "It should confine itself to laying down policy and seeing that its policy is implemented—by indication preferably, by enforcement if necessary." The report stated that the agency should establish a constant two-way flow of information with the public:

The outward flow should not only answer particular complaints, but should seek to develop public understanding, in all segments of the population, of the purposes and aspirations of the Canadian broadcasting system. Until now, the dialogue between the broadcasting system and the people it seeks to serve has been confused and muted. People with constructive suggestions and critical comments about broadcasting have not known where to go with them and their ideas have been little welcomed by the broadcasting agencies. Questions in the House of Commons by interested Members have been an ineffectual and unsatisfactory method of obtaining and bringing public opinion to bear on the broadcasting system. We

think the Authority (the Commission) should become the recognized source for information about Canadian broadcasting; it should receive complaints, give explanations in response to complaints, and generally apply, when appropriate, views and information given by the public in developing its policies for Canadian broadcasting.

The Broadcasting Act includes a description of the public hearing, the vehicle by which public participation can be practiced. Section 19 (2) of the Act states:

A public hearing shall be held by the Commission, if the Executive Committee is satisfied that it would be in the public interest to hold such a hearing, in connection with

- (a) the amendment of a broadcasting licence;
- (b) the issue of a licence to carry on temporary network operation; or
- (c) a complaint by a person with respect to any matter within the powers of the Commission.

Most complaints or comments are handled by mail but others are dealt with during regularly scheduled hearings. During the hearings, held regionally in Canada and scheduled to be applicable as far as is practical and possible to that region, time is made available for public comment. These can be "interventions" directed at a particular applicant appearing at that hearing, or a general representation.

Hearings are held to gather facts, ideas, and opinions and the Commission has been impressed with the public interest shown. In 1972-73 at 14 hearings, involving 600 applicants, there was more public interest than ever before. At a Vancouver hearing more than 24 "public" interventions were tabled and at two Ottawa hearings there was standing room only as the hall brimmed over with interested community members.

Although public interest swelled markedly in 1972-73 the Commission has always had good response, in relation to many other public agencies, at the hearings it has scheduled for consideration of major policies and regulations. These have included hearings on the extension of service, cable television, and Canadian content. The most recent policy issue brought before the public in this manner, the future of frequency modulation (FM radio), has shown a further increase in public comment. Hundreds of briefs and letters were received. The "Proposal for an FM radio policy in the private sector," issued 19 April 1973, closed with this simple request, "The general public, broadcasters and all other interested parties are invited to comment on the proposed FM radio policy."

Public attitudes

Before dealing with the public hearing, a short examination of the Canadian public's attitude toward broadcasting is in order. The Canadian public has always

interacted in at least some manner with the broadcasting system and over the years developed very distinct attitudes toward broadcasting.

The CRTC was created at a critical time in Canadian broadcasting, not only because of pressures inherent in the broadcasting system but because the Canadian public seemed to have reached a higher level of awareness about the importance of its communications systems. In the fifty-year history of Canadian broadcasting, which includes many outstanding achievements, especially notable because we border a country that has the world's most highly developed mass media, there have on occasion been examples of public participation and interest in broadcasting. But these were rare and sporadic. In the late twenties and early thirties Canadians rallied behind the concept of a nationalized radio network, which became the CBC. The parliamentary record shows that the public responded favourably to public ownership of part of the system because of the nature of private enterprise broadcasting, which could not adequately serve Canadians living outside urban areas. Simply because of economics, rural and remote audiences were not large enough to produce advertising revenues. Canadians recognized that equitable service was feasible in this country only through a national broadcasting sector. Canadians have retained an awareness of that fact to this day.

But more than the democratic idea of equitable service was behind the nationalization concept. That has been documented by historians but is nowhere more evident than in the statement of a Royal Commission that studied broadcasting in 1929: "Canadian radio listeners want Canadian broadcasting." The temptation to succumb entirely to the pull of American broadcasting was resisted.

When Canadians showed interest in establishing a *Canadian* service available equally to all, they did not begin what many had hoped would be a long tradition. For many years following there was little public concern over broadcasting. There was no public scrutiny of the system, and there was little demand for it. Broadcasting in both the public (CBC) and private enterprise sectors developed rapidly but quietly with little public awareness of changes, issues, or problems. When television was first introduced there was a clamor for sets and access to service but that was all. It was a novelty, a source of entertainment, but not a means of communicating, not for talking with one another.

Then something happened. In the mid-sixties broadcasting entered a new era. Cable television (allowing an increased number of signals and channels) with portable and inexpensive and easy to operate cameras and recorders was on the horizon, and suddenly things were different. Corresponding to this was a general change in public attitudes toward mass media. Research indicates that from the fifties to the sixties attitudes toward television in particular polarized, developed, and filled out. Issues involving mass media and sensationalism, violence and television, and television and culture became of public concern. In the midst of all this

activity the government launched a study (the Fowler Committee, 1965) that was to examine broadcasting and suggest a method to accommodate the public interest that had developed. The result was the formation of the CRTC.

Although other agencies also dealt with industries that greatly affected every individual and society as whole, none had been established at such an appropriate time, a time when public awareness and interest was growing. The CRTC as a regulatory body became the focal point for public participation in decisions that affected broadcasting. In the ensuing six years it was done, mainly through the device of the public hearing. Let's examine the methods involved in the public hearing process.

CRTC rules of procedure

As with any public body designed to regulate public property, specific rules must be followed to insure that everyone is given fair opportunity to present his proposals, comments, etc. This applies both to applicants and persons or groups of people making interventions. The following is a summary of the rules of procedure for interventions.

VIEWING APPLICATIONS

In order for the public to familiarize itself with applications for licence renewal, or applications for new stations, the Commission has a Public Examination Room in its offices at 100 Metcalfe Street, Ottawa where the public can view the examination file of any application which is scheduled (as per CRTC public notices) to be considered by the Commission. Applications can also be viewed at the offices of or place designated by an applicant in a given area.

INTERVENTION TO AN APPLICATION

An intervention is a clear, succinct statement by any person wishing to support, oppose, or modify any application(s) which has been announced for a public hearing.

It should preferably be typed, and divided into consecutively-numbered paragraphs for easy identification of subject matter and should contain the following information:

- intent of the person or group initiating the intervention
- clear and concise facts upon which the intervention is based
- name, address, and telephone number of the person initiating the intervention (or the group representative)
- any documents explaining or supporting the intervention
- intention to appear at the public hearing or not.

RECIPIENTS OF INTERVENTIONS

A signed copy should be sent to the applicant and to other persons the Commission may designate. For example, if an intervention supports one applicant, and in so doing mentions reasons why it opposes competing applications, a copy of the intervention should also be sent to these applicants.

The Commission requires two copies of all interventions. Both should be legible and easily photocopied since processing interventions requires many copies. In any event, an intervention which is easily read will understandably require less effort to comprehend and digest.

TIME LIMIT

Interventions must be received in the Commission 15 days before the commencement of a public hearing. (This date is always specified in the notice of public hearing.) This 15-day period allows the Commission to register and process the interventions. Applicants also have a time limit in which to make their applications complete, i.e. information pertaining to an application for which a public notice has already been released cannot be admitted beyond the date of that release.

At the time an intervention is sent or delivered to the CRTC, a signed copy must also be sent to the applicant in order that the applicant has time to prepare a reply. The applicant is not obliged to make a written reply to the intervenor. However, if he chooses to do so, a signed copy must be provided to the Commission five days before the public hearing.

APPEARANCES AT PUBLIC HEARINGS

Any person who intends to appear, having followed the above outline of procedures, and make representations at a public hearing must file with the Commission, at least seven days prior to the hearing, a list setting forth the name, title, and position of each person who intends to appear with him at the hearing.

COMMUNITY GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS

Section 37 (1) of the CRTC Rules of Procedure states that "Where, at least two clear days before the day fixed for the commencement of a Public Hearing, representations are made to the Commission with respect to matters of local interest in the region in which the Public Hearing is to be heard, the Commission may provide an opportunity at the Public Hearing for the hearing of comments by community groups or individuals with respect to those matters."

Section 37 (3) of the CRTC Rules of Procedure goes on to say that "Where any licensee or applicant is the object of community groups or individuals heard at a Public Hearing pursuant to subsection (1), the licensee or applicant shall be given an opportunity to appear at the Public Hearing and be heard in reply."

This outline of procedures is intended to be an informal interpretation of the CRTC Rules of Procedure, SOR/71-330. A copy of the Rules may be obtained from Information Canada.

OTHER FORMS OF PARTICIPATION

For many people an appearance at a public hearing is not convenient. However, a letter to the Secretary of the Commission, whether it be a letter of query, support, or complaint, is also an effective means of participation. In this way, too, the Commission can be made aware of broadcasting needs and problems in particular parts of Canada.

Transcripts of hearings also can be viewed by the public at the Commission's offices and can be obtained from Information Canada. Tapes of public hearings are also available for listening at the Commission's offices to anyone requesting them. Copies of the tapes can be made by the public at their own expense and with their own equipment.

Anyone wishing to be kept informed of the Commission's decisions, public announcements, etc. has only to write to the Secretary of the Commission requesting that their name be added to the CRTC mailing list.

Some notes on the law

Mary Eberts

My thanks to Peter S. Grant, Barrister and Solicitor, for his aid in preparing the section on copyright and looking at various parts of this draft, and to Bruno Fioravanti, Barrister and Solicitor, for assistance in preparing the part on charitable organizations. This gratitude in no way fixes them with responsibility for any errors which may appear.

Access

Is there a right of access to the broadcast media in Canada? The short answer to this question is no. There is nothing in Canada's constitutional documents (the British North America Act, the Canadian Bill of Rights, for example) which gives individuals or groups the right to secure time from a broadcasting licensee to air messages of their own choosing. There are legal cases interpreting the British North America Act which deny governments the opportunity to restrict freedom of speech, except when such restrictions are necessary to safeguard society. Examples of permissible encroachments on freedom of speech are laws against treasonous or seditious utterances, obscenity, and restrictions imposed in times of real or apprehended war or insurrection, when the War Measures Act has been proclaimed in force. *The cases denying the government the right to restrict freedom of speech do not extend, however, to requiring that the government make available a positive right of access to the broadcast media.*

Some basis for an opportunity of access is afforded by the Broadcasting Act, and actions taken by the Canadian Radio-Television Commission (CRTC) under that Act. The exact extent of that opportunity is not yet entirely clear.

Section three of the Broadcasting Act declares a broadcasting policy for Canada, determined by Parliament. The Canadian Radio-Television Commission is to regulate and supervise the Canadian broadcasting system with a view to implementing that policy. Two parts of section three relate to the question of access: paragraphs 3(c) and 3(d).

Paragraph 3(c) of the Broadcasting Act states that

all persons licensed to carry on broadcasting undertakings have a responsibility for programmes they broadcast but the right to freedom of expression and the right of persons to receive programmes, subject only to generally applicable statutes and regulations, is unquestioned.

This paragraph probably does not give any individual the right to use the broadcasting media. Notice that it talks about the right of persons to *receive* programmes, not the right of persons to *broadcast* programmes. It

does mean, though, that a programmer, whether he is a licensee or not, is not subject to censorship by the CRTC or the government as long as he obeys the law.

The hurdle to be cleared by community programmers, then, is that of getting on the air in the first place. Because the Broadcasting Act says that broadcasting licensees have a responsibility for programmes they broadcast, clearing this hurdle usually means coming to some arrangement with a licensee for use of his facilities.

Arrangements with a licensee can take many forms. In some cases, they will be relatively simple oral agreements. In others, a written contract may be desired by one or both parties; in one such contract, the community programming group agreed to safeguard the licensee from any financial harm arising out of libel or slander in programmes prepared by the group and cablecast by the licensee.

The other part of section three which relates to access is paragraph 3(d). That paragraph states that

the programming provided by the Canadian broadcasting system should be varied and comprehensive and should provide reasonable, balanced opportunity for the expression of differing views on matters of public concern.

It is sometimes considered the basis of a Canadian "fairness doctrine." Even given this interpretation, the paragraph would probably not guarantee an individual right of access. The complicated Fairness Doctrine developed in the United States does not insure any one person the right to speak out on radio or television. It means only that a licensee should provide balanced coverage of an issue of public importance over a period of time. To do this, he may call upon spokesmen who represent different points of view. The Canadian Radio-Television Commission has not evolved a formal fairness doctrine, but its interpretation of paragraph 3(d) is not unlike the doctrine. If an individual or group has been personally attacked in the media, whether by the licensee, or a third person, a chance to refute the attack is usually required, but paragraph 3(d) is not usually interpreted as providing a right of access for individuals or groups in the first instance. As long as a licensee acts reasonably in providing balanced coverage of a public issue, his judgment will not be interfered with.

All of this seems pretty discouraging, you say. Is there nothing an individual or group can do to obtain access? Read on.

The concept of a community channel on cable television has been encouraged by the Commission from the time of its first major announcement on cable on 13 May 1969. Starting with its announcement on cable

television of 10 April 1970, the Commission has endorsed the idea of public access to these community channels.

In its policy statement on cable television, 16 July 1971, the Commission described three types of programming which might appear on a locally programmed cable channel: community programming, local origination, and informational programming. Community programming was described as "a process which involves direct citizen participation in programme planning and production." Of this process, the Commission stated that

Access to the community channel is the responsibility of the cable television licensee, but the means which are employed to best further the use of a channel for the local citizenry, to establish fair access, and to facilitate production, can be as varied as necessary to satisfy local needs. (p. 17)

Conflicts concerning fair and balanced use of the locally programmed channel which cannot be resolved between the operator and the person seeking access can be referred to the Commission.

There is a final important point. Perhaps the ultimate form of access to the media is media ownership. Businessmen have recognized this simple fact for quite some time; citizens' groups are also becoming aware of its potential. Community groups and associations in various parts of the country have been granted licences to operate cable television systems, television rebroadcasting stations, and low power relay transmitters; until quite recently, most of these licences were held by groups in small or remote communities, and represented in some instances the only media outlet available. On 3 August 1973, in Decision 73-391, the Commission awarded a licence for a UHF television undertaking to a community co-operative corporation in Hull; the proposed station will serve the national capital area. On 18 August 1973, the Commission granted an FM radio licence to the Kitchener-Waterloo community group, Wired World Inc., as an experiment in community expression. These developments represent a new opportunity for real access to the media.

Incorporation

You may wish to consider incorporating your group as a non-profit company, a society, or a co-operative. This step might be particularly useful if you have a large number of members, if you plan any long-range or extensive projects, or if you are dealing with others (licensees or potential source of funding) who may want some firm indication of responsibility before sharing their resources with you.

What are the advantages of incorporation? A group that is not incorporated does not have any legal existence apart from that of the members composing it. It cannot enter into contracts, or sue or be sued, in its own name. This means that an unincorporated association which might want to sign a lease, take out insurance, or buy or rent equipment, might have to do so in the name of one

of its members. It also means that that member, possibly others, could be held personally liable to pay any debts arising from the transaction.

Once an association is incorporated, it has a legal personality. It can do business—sign leases or contracts, buy, sell, rent—in its own name. Even though members might come and go, and the officers change from time to time, the corporation would continue in existence until it was officially dissolved. This kind of permanence is useful for a group which wants to become involved in a long project or establish an ongoing relationship with a broadcasting licensee. Incorporation also means that individual members and directors are not personally liable for any debts incurred by the corporation in carrying out its objectives. Each person is responsible only for payment of the membership fee or other contribution required by the constitution of the corporation or society.

The process of organizing a corporation may be valuable in helping members define the group's objectives, and create the most congenial situation for working together. If a group is fairly large and not formally organized, individual members may have difficulty in deciding who is going to be responsible for decisions, and also in making their opinions known to those who do make decisions. Similarly, it may be difficult to divide work fairly, so that each member feels useful without also feeling exploited.

Before a group can become incorporated, it is necessary for it to draw up a constitution and by-laws, describing how the proposed corporation will be structured, what its objectives will be, how many officers and directors it will have, what they will do, when general meetings will be held, and so on. The laws under which you will incorporate will have certain basic requirements respecting all of these organizational details, but there is still a lot of leeway for creation of a form best suited to your needs. Once this constitution is established in your letters patent or memorandum and articles, it must be observed by all group members, and can be changed only by agreement.

There may be more willingness on the part of government agencies and private foundations or companies to contribute funding to an incorporated group than to an unincorporated one. Some sources of funds may not be able to give money to individuals; others may simply have more confidence in an incorporated association. Depending on the objects of your group, you may try to have it registered as a charitable organization under the Income Tax Act (see next section). Contributions to registered charitable organizations are tax-deductible.

Finally, if your group is serious about community programming, you may eventually want to apply for a licence to operate your own broadcasting undertaking. The experience of establishing and operating a non-profit company, society, or co-operative may provide good background for doing this. Members would learn a lot about working together in a fairly structured situation, and be able to assess the extent of their

willingness to commit themselves to a long-term enterprise. If you decide to apply for a licence, your previous experience as an incorporated programming group might demonstrate to the CRTC your responsibility and interest.

WHERE TO INCORPORATE? WHO CAN INCORPORATE?

If your organization is active in more than one province, you could incorporate federally. Otherwise, incorporation can take place in the province to which you confine your activities.

The statutes governing incorporation in the various provinces and in Canada specify the number of persons who must sign an application for incorporation. In the case of non-profit corporations (as opposed to commercial ones), the persons signing the application must all intend to be active in the organization. All persons wishing to sign the application for incorporation should be of legal age; this varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. One corporation or co-operative can often be a member of another one; some statutes permit officers of the corporation or co-operative which wishes to be a member to sign the application for incorporation.

HOW TO INCORPORATE?

Filing an application to become incorporated may be the last—and possibly least complicated—part of your group's deliberations.

One useful first stage is to consult the statutes of your province, or of Canada if you are active in more than one province, to become informed about characteristics of the different types of corporate organization. You might wish to appoint a committee of members to undertake this task. Statutes are usually available in a public library or courthouse library; you may also be able to obtain them from the provincial bookstore or a local lawyer who is interested in your plans.

Non-profit companies, societies, and co-operative associations are three different forms of corporate organization in which you might be interested. Most provinces have a Companies Act, which will contain provisions dealing with non-profit companies (sometimes called corporations without share capital). In Ontario, provisions affecting non-profit companies are found in the Corporations Act; in Canada, in the Canada Corporations Act; in the other provinces and territories, in the Companies Act. Similarly, Canada and all the provinces and territories except Manitoba and Ontario have Co-operative Associations (or Co-operative Societies) Acts; in Manitoba and Ontario, provisions affecting co-operatives are found in the Companies Act and Corporations Act, respectively. Four provinces—British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Nova Scotia—have Societies Acts, as do the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

Once you have become acquainted with the features of these three kinds of corporation, you can choose which would be best for your purposes, and proceed with an

organizational meeting (or meetings) to draft a constitution and by-laws. To assist you in this undertaking, you might obtain copies of those in use by other groups with similar aims and activities. Sometimes the statute will contain provisions which must be included; or, it could provide a standard form which you can adapt to your purposes.

Submission of an application to incorporate is usually done on forms provided by the department of government which is concerned with corporations; a list of these officials is found at the end of this section. With the application should be submitted the required filing fee, which can be ascertained when you obtain your application forms.

Societies, non-profit companies, and co-operatives

SOCIETY

A society is a relatively simple form of corporation, but it has nonetheless all the powers, rights, and immunities vested by law in a corporation. It can, for example, acquire real estate, borrow money, and write cheques in its own name. No member of a society is liable in his individual capacity for a debt or liability of the society.

A society may be incorporated for any benevolent, philanthropic, charitable, provident, scientific, artistic, literary, social, educational, cultural, or sporting purpose, but not to carry on a trade or business.

Societies cannot be financed by means of capital divided into shares. To raise money, a society can borrow, or charge an initial membership fee and annual dues to persons wishing to belong; some may require a person to obtain a debenture of the society upon becoming a member, the money he pays being refunded when he ceases membership. In most provinces, societies are also allowed to accept donations.

The affairs of a society, like the affairs of any other corporation, are to be conducted in accordance with its charter and by-laws. The funds of a society can be used only for its legitimate objects, which are included in the charter. Usually, the law requires the holding of one annual meeting, and annual filing of a statement showing its assets, liabilities, revenue, and expenditures, and the names, addresses, and occupations of officers and directors.

NON-PROFIT COMPANY

In all jurisdictions, non-profit companies can be found for artistic or charitable objects. To obtain incorporation as a non-profit company, you should include in the objects of your group provisions that the profits or other income of the company will be applied only to promote its objects, and that no dividends will be paid to members. Similarly, you should not include in the objects of the corporation an activity which is of a business nature (for example, "to carry on the business

of film-processing") unless you state that this activity is only going to be undertaken as an aid to your principal non-profit activities.

In some jurisdictions (for example, Quebec, Manitoba, Ontario), a non-profit company cannot be financed by means of share capital. In this, it would be like a society, raising its money by means of membership fees and dues, donations, and borrowing. In other jurisdictions (for example, New Brunswick) a non-profit company may be financed by shares, but no dividends can be paid to shareholders.

CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS

Most co-operative corporations have three essential characteristics which distinguish them from ordinary business corporations. An individual member or shareholder of a co-operative will usually have only one vote, regardless of the number of shares he holds. No individual member or shareholder may vote by proxy. The surplus funds arising from the business of the co-operative, after providing a fund to meet contingencies, are distributed in the form of patronage dividends to members, and to other customers who may not be members if the charter provides for distribution to them. The amount of these dividends depends on the volume of business done by the member with the co-operative during the year.

A co-operative can be established to carry on most kinds of business that an ordinary business corporation can conduct. Co-operative corporations can be financed by means of share capital, or without share capital. Traditionally, co-operative corporations have been most active in agricultural, fishing, and other primary producing industries; co-operatives of consumers of such primary products have been frequently organized. Recently, however, the Commission granted a licence to operate a UHF television broadcasting undertaking to a community co-operative in the national capital region: the Coopérative de Télévision de l'Outaouais (CTVO).

Charitable organizations

The Income Tax Act of Canada allows a taxpayer (including a corporation) to deduct from its income for tax purposes gifts made to registered Canadian charitable organizations. This provision can sometimes be quite helpful to groups seeking funds; your organization might want to investigate the possibility of registering with the Department of National Revenue as a charitable organization.

It is not necessary to be incorporated in order to register, but you should be able to indicate the aims and objectives of the group, as well as its structure. Be prepared to submit to the Department a copy of your constitution and by-laws, and incorporating documents if you have them. The Department also requires that you submit a statement of receipts and disbursements, and a statement of assets and liabilities, for the last com-

pleted year prior to the date of your application.

The Income Tax Act does not contain a definition of "charitable organization." There are a few points, however, which you might bear in mind when determining if you could apply for registration.

The basic characteristic of a charitable organization is that no part of its resources may be applied for the personal benefit of its members. If your group is incorporated as a non-profit company or society, this requirement will probably be satisfied. The charter of the company might also provide, however, that any accumulated profits cannot go to the members, and that in the event of dissolution of the company any remaining assets after payment of liabilities should be distributed to one or more recognized charitable organizations in Canada.

Secondly, there are four types of charity recognized by law: those for the relief of poverty, for the advancement of education, for the advancement of religion, and for other purposes beneficial to the community, but not included in the first three categories. The Department will review the aims and objectives of your group to see if they fall within one of these categories before granting registration.

The activities of a charitable organization must be for the purpose of benefitting the public, or a fairly large and identifiable segment of it; activities which are solely for the benefit of members might not be considered charitable. Write to the address below for further details.

If you succeed in becoming registered, the Department of National Revenue will require you to keep records and books of account (including a duplicate of each receipt for a donation), that will enable deductible donations to be verified. More information is available from the address below.

Charitable and Non-Profit
Organizations Section,
Deputy Minister of National
Revenue for Taxation,
875 Heron Road,
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0L8

Where to find more information

More information is available about non-profit companies, societies, and co-operatives from the addresses below.

Jurisdiction	Non-profit company	Society	Co-operative
British Columbia	Registrar of Companies, Law Court Victoria, BC	same	same
Alberta	Registrar of Companies, Department of Consumer Affairs, 4th floor, Financial Building, 10621 100 Ave.,	same	Director of Co-operatives, Activities and Credit Union Branch, Dept. of Agriculture, 803 Agriculture Building, Edmonton, Alberta
Saskatchewan	Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, 302 Legislative Bldg., Regina, Saskatchewan	same	Registrar of Co-operatives, Department of Co-operation, 2505 11th Ave., Regina, Saskatchewan
Manitoba	Companies Branch, 210 Osborne St. No., Winnipeg R3C 0V8		Co-operatives Branch, 210 Osborne St. No., Winnipeg R3C 0V8
Ontario	Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations Companies Branch, 555 Yonge St., Toronto M4Y 1Y7		same
Quebec	Service des Compagnies, Ministère des Institutions Financières, Hôtel du Gouvernement, Québec		Service des Associations Coopératives, Ministère des Institutions Financières, Hôtel du Gouvernement, Québec
Prince Edward Island	Deputy Provincial Secretary, Box 2000, Charlottetown, PEI		Supervisor of Co-operative Union, Central Lot 16, Charlottetown, PEI
New Brunswick	Department of the Provincial Secretary, PO Box 430, Centennial Building, Fredericton, NB		Registrar of Co-operative Associations, PO Box 430, Centennial Building, Fredericton, NB
Nova Scotia	Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, PO Box 1529, Halifax, Nova Scotia	same	same
Newfoundland	Director of Corporate Affairs, Department of Provincial Affairs and Environment, Confederation Bldg., St. John's, Nfld.		Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Department of Provincial Affairs and Environment, Confederation Bldg., St. John's, Nfld.
Yukon	Registrar of Companies, Whitehorse, YT	same	Registrar of Co-operatives, Whitehorse, YT
Northwest Territories	Registrar of Companies, Yellowknife, NWT	same	Registrar of Co-operatives, Yellowknife, NWT
Canada	Corporations Branch, Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Ottawa K1A 0C9	same	

Copyright

As the name implies, copyright is, basically, "the right to copy." The creator of an original literary, dramatic, musical, or artistic work has, for a limited period of time (usually his lifetime plus fifty years), the sole right to publish his work, to perform it in public, and to produce or reproduce the work in any form whatsoever. He also has the sole right to authorize others to do these acts, and to prevent others from doing them without his permission.

In Canada, copyright is given and protected by a federal statute. The Copyright Act is chapter C-30 of the Revised Statutes of Canada, 1970. Canada has also signed and ratified two international agreements respecting copyright, the Berne Convention (in 1928) and the Universal Copyright Convention (in 1962). These treaties give the artists of one participating country the same protection as the law of the second country would give its own artists.

An author (or other creator) can get copyright in a work by creating it. The law does not require that he do any official act to secure copyright. Courts will presume that an author has copyright in his original work unless someone else proves differently.

There is a procedure in the Copyright Act by which a creator can enter a copyright on the Register of Copyrights maintained by the federal Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The registration procedure is fairly simple and inexpensive; a separate application and fee of \$10, must be filed to register the copyright in each work. For information and forms, contact The Commissioner of Patents, The Copyright Office, 11th floor, Place du Portage, Hull, Quebec K1A 0C9.

It is not necessary to register. If you do not, however, it is important that you be able to establish that you created the work, and show when it was created. One method of doing this, often suggested, is to mail a copy of the work to yourself by registered mail, and keep it in its unopened envelope or container. Any other good evidence of authorship and date may do as well: for example, a dated and signed letter to a friend or colleague (someone who is likely to keep it).

When a Canadian creator has acquired copyright protection in Canada, he is also automatically protected in all other Commonwealth countries and in most European countries under the provisions of the Berne Convention.

The Universal Copyright Convention affords protection automatically to unpublished works, without notices or other formalities. To have a published work protected in another country under the terms of this treaty, all copies of the work must bear a notice, consisting of the symbol, the name of the owner of the copyright, and the year of first publication. For example: © Henry Smith 1968.

We have already mentioned the three basic rights included in the concept of copyright: the sole right to publish an unpublished work, the sole right to perform a work in public ("the performing right"), and the sole right to produce or reproduce the work in any material form whatsoever. Included in these three basic rights are more specific ones. The copyright holder can produce, reproduce, perform, or publish any translation of the work. If it is a play, the copyright holder has the sole right to transform it into a novel or other non-dramatic work; if a novel, the sole right to transform it into a play. The copyright holder of a literary, dramatic, or musical work has the sole right to make any record or film of it, or any other device by which the work can be mechanically performed ("the mechanical right"). The copyright holder of a literary, dramatic, musical, or artistic work has the sole right to reproduce, adapt, and publicly present the work by radiocommunication.

Except where otherwise allowed by the Copyright Act, a person who seeks to do any one of these acts in respect of a copyright work must obtain the written authorization of the copyright holder before proceeding. Unauthorized dealing with the work is called infringement of copyright.

The copyright holder can sue to restrain unauthorized use, and can usually obtain damages (money) from the person who has infringed his copyright.

COPYRIGHT AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

How does copyright law affect the community programmer? First of all, a community programmer might wish to assert copyright in his own original work, in order to prevent its being used by another in a fashion which would be detrimental to him, or to the work. Secondly, someone else might wish to assert his copyright protection against the community programmer. In both cases, it is advisable to have a clear idea of the extent of the protection given by the Copyright Act.

As indicated above, the Act gives substantial rights to the authors of literary, dramatic, musical or artistic works and where a community programmer seeks to use such works he should realize that in most cases he will need to obtain proper authorization. This is not true in all cases, however. In many circumstances, the Copyright Act specifically allows a community programmer to make use of other people's creative work without authorization. Some of these circumstances are noted below; in cases of doubt you should speak to someone versed in copyright law:

1. First, the Act only confers protection for the lifetime of the creator plus 50 years; in the case of films and negatives, the term is 50 years from the making of the negative. All works created before this are said to be in the public domain and can be freely used without permission. This includes most classical music, drama, literature and art, and much material of an historical nature.
2. You should also ask yourself, is what I intend to use an original literary or artistic work? Copyright protec-

tion does not extend to extempore conversation, as for example in panel discussions, or to sports spectacles such as hockey or football games, or to news events or happenings "on the street," such as shots of crowds in public places and so on. In each case, there has to be an original scripted work involved. Nor does copyright protection extend to mere ideas but only to the literary form in which they are expressed. So there is considerable freedom to use "plots" or "game formats" without permission.

3. The Act also allows what is called "fair dealing" with any copyright work "for the purposes of private study, research, criticism, review, or newspaper summary." This is usually interpreted to mean that you can reproduce brief excerpts from a work, e.g. a film clip, a literary passage, or a scene from a play, where the excerpt is the subject of criticism or analysis.

4. The Act also freely allows copyright works to be performed in private without permission. Only when the performance is "in public" must permission be obtained. Since the diffusion of works to cable television subscribers has been held not to be "in public", this means that copyright works can be performed live on cablecast channels for immediate diffusion to private homes without permission. This exception does not extend to the recording of such works however.

5. Another exception relates to community programmers who have incorporated themselves as a charitable organization, as suggested earlier. The Act specifically allows such organizations to perform musical works in public without permission as long as this is in furtherance of a religious, educational or charitable object. Again this exception does not apply to recordings.

6. Finally, an important practical point is that the copyright holder must feel sufficiently aggrieved by the use or intended use to take action. A non-profit community group doing programming on a cable television system would probably not be subject to many complaints from copyright holders. Usually a demand to cease the offending use will precede any legal action; such a demand can easily be complied with.

Defamation

Defamation is what the law calls a "tort"—or, in the province of Quebec, under the Civil Code, a "delict." A tort is not a crime for which the state will impose a penalty, in the way that theft is a crime. Rather it is a wrong which may give one person the right to recover "damages"—money—from another for injuring him.

Defamation is a particular kind of injury: that inflicted on a person's reputation. Defamation occurs when one person publishes to another words or other material containing an *untrue* imputation against the reputation of a third.

The general standard used to determine whether an imputation is defamatory is: would it lower a person in the estimation of "right-thinking" members of society generally, or expose him to hatred, contempt, and ridicule?

LIBEL AND SLANDER

Libel and slander are both defamation. In general, a slander is a defamatory communication made by means of spoken words, or in some other transitory form: looks, signs, or gestures. Libel, on the other hand, is a communication of defamatory material in more or less permanent form: a newspaper article, handbill, or book.

Distinguishing between libel and slander on the basis of permanence is fairly impractical and sometimes difficult where broadcasting is concerned. A spontaneous remark on a radio broadcast which is heard by many people may do more harm to a person's reputation than a written remark in a newspaper of small circulation. Similarly, listeners often cannot distinguish between remarks that have been scripted in advance (permanent) and those that have been made spontaneously (transitory). For this reason, many provinces have included in their legislation a provision that broadcast remarks will be considered libel.

Someone who claims that he has been slandered may have a more difficult task in recovering damages than someone who has been libelled. In an action for libel, the courts may presume that a person has suffered injury once he has established the libel. In an action for slander, a plaintiff usually cannot rely on this presumption of damage: he has to show specifically that as a result of the slander, he lost some material advantage that can be measured in money, for example, that a prospective employer refused to hire him because he believed the remark. In only four situations can a person who complains of slander rely on the presumption of damage: an imputation of a crime for which you would suffer corporal punishment (rape), an imputation of an infectious disease (VD), an imputation of unchastity to a woman or girl, and a remark calculated to disparage a person in any office, profession, calling, trade, or business.

This distinction is a fairly complicated one, and some jurisdictions have removed it by their legislation. In Alberta, for example, the Defamation Act defines "defamation" as both libel and slander and provides that where defamation is proved, damage shall be presumed.

PUBLICATION

In order for something to constitute defamation, it must be published. Publication is effected by any act which conveys the defamatory matter to the person to whom it is communicated: spoken word, a gesture, distribution of handbills, and similar means. So, "publishing" defamatory matter is a more general idea than "publishing" a book; but defamation can be published in a published book or newspaper.

A person who publishes material which contains untrue imputations against another's reputation will be liable, unless he can make out one of the defenses described below. Sometimes, though, more than one person may be involved in the "publication"—the editor, publisher, printer, and vendor of a newspaper, for example, or the

community group, and cable operator in a community programming situation. Usually, all of these people would be potentially liable for publication of a defamatory remark; a plaintiff may choose to proceed against only one of them. Or, if one of them has not been the "first or main publisher" of a work which contains a libel, but has taken only a "subordinate part in disseminating it" he may not be liable if he shows that: he did not know that it contained the libel, he did not know that it was of the character likely to contain libel, and that such absence of knowledge was not due to negligence on his part. This defense would cover, for example, a mailman who delivers a letter in the ordinary course of his business, would probably cover a messenger company which carried a tape from one system to another, and might even cover a cable operator showing bicycled tapes.

Defenses in an action for defamation are:

1. that you never published any of the words complained of.
2. that the words did not refer to the person complaining, that they were not understood to refer to that person, and that they were not capable of being understood to refer to him.
3. that the words did not bear the alleged defamatory meaning, that they were not understood to bear it, and that they were not capable of bearing it.
4. that publication of the words was authorized by the person complaining, or done with his consent.
5. Justification: Although a plaintiff does not have to prove that the words he complains of are false, the person who published them can defend himself by proving that the words are true. Truth of the remarks is a complete defense to an action of libel or slander. The person who made the remarks should prove the truth of all material statements in them, and must show that his facts were true, not just that he believed they were.
6. Absolute privilege: With regard to some situations, it is considered more important to create an atmosphere in which the full account of a matter can be disclosed than to protect an individual reputation. These occasions are said to be protected by an absolute privilege: remarks made in them cannot be the subject of an action for defamation. Absolute privilege will protect: statements made in the course of judicial proceedings, or quasi-judicial proceedings; fair and accurate reports in a newspaper of proceedings publicly heard before a court; statements made by one officer to another in the course of official duty; statements made in the course of parliamentary proceedings; statements contained in published reports of the legislature; and statements made between lawyer and client.
7. Qualified privilege: Absolute privilege arises because a particular function of society can be better executed under its protection. Qualified privilege arises in some instances when a particular duty or interest of an individual can be better undertaken under its protection. In situations of qualified privilege, a man stating what he believes to be the truth about another is

protected, provided that he made the statement honestly and without any indirect or improper motive.

When, for example, a person has a legal, moral, or social duty to make a statement, and the person to whom he makes it has a corresponding interest or duty in receiving it, the statement is protected. A person providing reference for a former employee would be within the ambit of this protection, as would a family member warning a relative about the character of someone with whom the relative is involved. Statements about the misconduct of someone in authority, if made to the proper person, are also protected.

Statements made by a person in the conduct of his own affairs, where his own interest is at stake, may also be protected. A person who is attacked in the press, for example, has a right to rebut the charge, and any defamatory statements which he makes in the course of his rebuttal are protected by privilege if they are confined to answering the attack and do not themselves constitute a fresh attack.

8. Fair comment: Words which are fair comment on a matter of public interest are also protected. This defence is available to private citizens, as well as journalists, and is fairly broad. It is probably the most important defence for community programmers who wish, through their work, to make comments on local affairs.

To be protected as fair comment, a statement must be a comment. If the words contain allegations of fact, passing as comment, the person making them must be able to prove they are true. Ideally, a person making the statement should set out the facts upon which it is based first, and then proceed with his comments upon them.

A second requirement is that the comment be fair. In order to be considered fair, a comment must satisfy the following conditions: it must be based on facts truly stated, it must be an honest expression of the person's real opinion, and it must not contain imputations of corrupt motives on the part of the person whose conduct is being criticized unless those imputations are warranted by facts.

The third requirement is that the comments must be concerned with facts that are matters of public interest. Comments on some private feud, no matter how titillating, would probably not be considered to be of public interest; nonetheless, there is a wide degree of latitude in determining what is. Some examples:

- The public conduct of any person who holds, or seeks, a public office or position of trust.
- Political and state matters such as government policy, merits of appointments to public office.
- Administration of justice, but not while a case is being heard.
- Management of public institutions, hospitals, for example.
- Administration of local affairs by local authorities.

•Every kind of literary or artistic work placed before the public.

•Anything which would fairly be said to invite comment or challenge public attention: a claim to be the world's oldest man, for example, or a letter to the editor of a newspaper.

9. Accord and satisfaction: Where a person who feels himself aggrieved by remarks agrees to accept an apology in satisfaction of his claim, and the person who made the remarks publishes an apology, a good defense can be made out. Similarly, it is good defense to a subsequent action that the person complaining has agreed in writing under seal to release the other from liability.

LIBEL AND SLANDER INSURANCE

You can obtain insurance against financial loss arising from claims and litigation brought by persons who feel

that they have been defamed in your programmes. The cost of such insurance may vary depending on the number of subscribers to the cable television system, the amount of coverage you desire, and the number of hours cablecast each week.

Often you will be able to discover the name of an agent or company who will write such insurance from the licensee with whom you are making a programming arrangement. In some instances, the licensee may request that you obtain insurance before undertaking programming on any extensive basis. For example, an agreement between Gagnon T.V. Ltée and Télévision Communautaire de St-Félicien Ltée, signed in April 1972, contained a term that the group would secure insurance against claims and litigation arising from defamatory statements contained in programmes produced by the group and cablecast by Gagnon. The insurance would be taken out in the names of both the group and the company, and the premiums would be paid by the group.

Community radio programming facilities

Doug Baer

Radio: the potential

Radio broadcasting is very inexpensive compared to television. The costs for establishing a radio broadcast facility, consisting of two or three fully equipped studios, with additional portable equipment, is about the same as the cost of the equipment alone for a broadcast quality video studio using two cameras. And since video equipment is more complicated technically, maintenance costs tend to be higher. While the cost advantages of using radio for community programming are obvious, its suitability for various community purposes requires some explanation.

DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL ARTISTRY

The potential of both radio and television as a vehicle for developing local artistic talent has yet to be realized. Radio and television each have particular contributions to make in promoting Canadian music, film, drama, and literature.

Equipment currently available makes it simple for radio broadcasting to present music performed by local musicians, without relying on large record companies to press recordings. Most community broadcasters have the equipment to record almost any type of musical group. The recording ability of a tape recorder designed for broadcast use is not as great as that of special and very expensive "multi-track" tape recorders used in the recording industry, but broadcast recorders can be used to produce adequate recordings.

The distribution potential of a radio broadcast station makes its contribution to the development of local musical talent important. Once a tape has been produced, the individual "songs" (up to a half-hour, which is as long as one side of a disc recording) can be put onto a tape cartridge, which is then programmed like a record. The operator merely has to insert the cartridge into the machine and press a button, which is easier than cueing a record. It is possible, in this way, to develop an entire tape cartridge music library consisting of local musical talent.

Because of its reliance on visual cues, drama would seem to be more adaptable to television than radio. However, many plays can be adapted successfully to radio. Live performances are usually impossible to tape for television or radio (lighting and miking represent major problems), but studio versions of dramatic productions can be undertaken. Local writers can be more readily exposed through the medium of radio than television. Short stories can be read over the air on radio, something which would not be very well suited to television.

Both radio and television, the latter perhaps to a lesser extent, can be utilized for purposes of reviews of literature, music, theatre, or film, and such reviews can obviously include local artistic works.

LIVE INVOLVEMENT

The experience of some community broadcasters suggests that the physical limitations of radio reduce its usefulness in the case of many educational projects or presentations, but there are still many possibilities, for example, telephone broadcast lines or remote FM relay transmitters. The expense of video replaying equipment makes live involvement in community events and activities generally impractical, although it is possible to film an event for replay later.

Existing audio technology for direct broadcast of events offers great potential. The broadcast of public meetings can keep both community members informed and can provide a stimulus for community members to attend a meeting. In addition, the same process can apply to musical concerts, which could easily be broadcast live over radio.

Relaying equipment can also be used for programming originated from various locations in the community where different activities take place. For example, a studio could easily be established in a local school or university for use by students as part of their formal education. The same applies to many community locations, from union halls to local government offices.

FEEDBACK: THE TELEPHONE

The telephone provides the community radio broadcaster with a potential for community involvement not possible otherwise. Commercial radio talk programmes have only begun to exploit this potential. Many radio discussions could be augmented with comments from people in the community at large. Local government officials could use air time as an opportunity not only to convey their thoughts but also to listen to community members; this concept can apply to many organizations dealing with the general public.

Equipment

Recent developments in both the audio and video fields have contributed toward the ability of a non-professional user to do production work. In the field of audio, the various automatic circuits will be described; similar circuits have been developed for non-professional video tape recorders although these automatic video level circuits are not yet available for broadcast-quality equipment. The various video equivalents of audio broadcast devices, such as video tape cartridges or

cassettes, still require a considerable amount of technical expertise to run.

There are substantially different time requirements for the production of a video as opposed to an audio programme. Production time includes the thought an individual must put into organizing a programme, sets and lighting (in the case of video), edits, and so on. Wired World in Kitchener, Ontario for a time used both video and audio equipment, and found that video programmes took much longer to put together (this may in part be due to the difficulty in producing edits with the half-inch equipment used). Community members, this group discovered, become easily disinterested if the programme production took more than a couple of hours per hour of finished programme, and so the tendency has been for video users to be a restricted group of people keenly interested in video. The degree to which this factor restricts general community participation seems to be reduced in the case of radio; a wider variety of people seem to be willing not only to participate in programmes, but to do the relatively less demanding technical work themselves.

Technical equipment can tend to inhibit some users. For example, "throttling" microphones close to the mouths of programme participants can cause these people to be unnaturally nervous. The difficulties encountered with radio, where a studio can be a living-room arrangement with microphones and a small mixer, are substantially less than those encountered with video equipment, in which bright lighting (making the studio seem quite unnatural) is mandatory. In addition, most people tend to become somewhat nervous about their physical appearance in front of a television camera. Nonetheless, the physical presence of equipment in a room is an inhibiting factor for some people, both in radio and television.

TECHNICAL MAINTENANCE

Equipment maintenance can be one of the more serious problems associated with keeping a community broadcasting undertaking operating. In this case, audio equipment is less prone to breakdown than video equipment and is relatively easy for an experienced electronic technician to troubleshoot and repair.

Successful operation of technical equipment depends on routine equipment checks and maintenance. All tape equipment, audio and video, such as cartridges or regular recorders, needs to be aligned regularly if it is to be kept in optimum condition. With audio equipment, alignment and servicing is slightly easier and may not be needed as frequently, but there is a need for regular weekly or even daily checks for both audio and video equipment.

Finding technical help can be a problem. To engineers, maintenance work (especially in the audio field) is not very creative technically, and it may be difficult for community broadcasters to find competent people. Many engineers have established private companies which work on a contract basis with broadcast operations, although this alternative is expensive. It is difficult

to determine whether future technical developments will bring solutions to this problem. Equipment can be designed on a modular basis so non-technically-inclined individuals could troubleshoot to the point of finding the defective module, which could be returned to the factory (ideally many modules in, say, a mixer board, would be similar to the broadcast operation so that one could keep one or two replacements on hand). Unfortunately, this solution will not work for devices that are not purely electronic; tape recorders and turntables have mechanical parts and linkages which cannot easily be "modularized".

RADIO EQUIPMENT: THE BASICS

As veteran community radio broadcasters will testify, a studio can be almost anything. It can be a sidewalk on the main street of a community with a cassette machine as its equipment, or it can be an elaborately sound-proofed room with a 20-channel mixer unit coupled with expensive multi-track recorders to record musicians.

Even if a heavy reliance is placed on the use of cassette recorders and portable equipment, some sort of permanent studio facility capable of either going on-air live or producing tapes suitable for broadcast is usually necessary if either a great volume of programming for use through existing radio outlets is contemplated, or, of course, if a community broadcasting licence is sought or has been granted. A simple studio configuration consisting mostly of what the industry refers to as "broadcast quality" equipment can be set up with about \$4000.

One of the biggest difficulties for a would-be community programmer is figuring out what equipment is needed (to distinguish between frills and necessities). A lot of planning behind establishing a studio facility relates to whether the studio is going live on the air as opposed to merely producing tapes. While a tape-only studio must use equipment of as high a quality as a live studio, being directly on-air does create a few additional headaches. Instead of being able to stop the tape onto which the programme is being recorded to start another record, that second record must be set up even before the first one is finished playing, and so two turntables are needed instead of one. A tape studio could effectively use two turntables but it is not essential for more than one to be present.

TURNTABLES

Community programming means less music programming, therefore turntables are not necessary, or at least not as necessary, right? Wrong. The use of music for inserts between segments of a discussion often makes the discussion more "listenable" by giving the listener time to reflect on what has just been said. Very few types of community programming do not require some sort of a break, if only to fill a brief gap between the end of a programme and the beginning of the next. And of course, local serious collectors and musicologists

might want to be included in the repertory of community broadcasting.

Turntables other than those specifically designed for broadcasting operation are not capable of standing up to the pressure of constant use; broadcast turntables have heavy-duty parts which enable them to be used continuously or (what is worse) constantly turned off and on again.

The cartridge device which changes the mechanical impulse of the stylus into a usable electrical signal for broadcast is also substantially different. Heavy use means a more rugged cartridge is necessary, and this is compounded by the fact that records are "back cued", that is, turned backwards to put the needle at the exact point at which the record is to start. Even some of the so-called broadcast cartridges fail to stand up to the pressures of such use. Record cueing is the only way that a tight programme can be put together; it is most often used on popular music stations that do everything possible to avoid dead air.

A number of broadcast turntables are on the market, ranging in cost from roughly \$250 to \$500, excluding tone arms and cartridges, another \$100 plus, and excluding a base or "pedestal" (which a person with carpentry experience can build for about \$40 in materials in half a day).

TAPE DECKS

Two tape decks are necessary for almost any production facility. An on-air facility could possibly be used with just one tape deck, but if it is to be also used for taping, a second machine is essential.

A possible, but generally not desirable alternative is to use one tape machine and to "splice edit" all tapes. Instead of running an "old" tape onto a "new" tape (from one tape recorder to another, a process called dubbing), it is possible to edit a tape by physically cutting the tape, and then taping it back together after the unwanted portion has been deleted. This process tends to be extremely wasteful. Regular dubbing eliminates the wastage of hundreds of feet of tape per edit, and tapes tend to last longer when they are not filled with splices. Even most production studios using the mechanical edit technique to work on final tapes do so only after most of the editing has been done by dubbing, leaving only the final few inches of tape for any given edit to be cut out.

Tape recorders manufactured for home use are not very useful as they break down quickly. However, there are a number of "semi-professional" tape recorders on the market in the \$800-\$1400 range which will do a job as adequate as more expensive broadcast recorders (costing \$2000-\$3500). Most home tape recorders put four tracks of recorded material on a tape, while broadcast equipment is generally two-track or single track (Fig. 1). Generally, single or double track are recommended because such configurations make editing easier, are compatible with most broadcast standards, which is important if tapes are being sent or

received, and tend to produce a signal of better quality. Most semi-professional machines are manufactured in four-track configurations, but have optional two-track versions.

Two-track recorders are normally used for stereo signals in one direction only, although it is possible to have each of the two recorded signals travelling in opposite directions for two mono signals. Other configurations are possible but not standard. Specialized recorders for music studios may use eight, sixteen, or more tracks, all in the same direction.

If programme material is to originate from community members at large, some people may wish to make tapes on their home tape recorders. Generally, this seems to happen infrequently in most community radio situations. More often people borrow the radio facilities equipment even if the latter is in short supply and they must wait to get it. However, provisions for accepting four-track tapes made on home tape recorders would be useful. Community radio broadcasters tend to compromise at this point with one four-track recorder in the entire facility with all of the other perhaps five or six recorders being two-track or single track.

The tape recorder is one of the more complicated pieces of equipment in the studio. If many new people are expected to have to learn how to use equipment, the machines need to be kept as simple as possible. Extra knobs and levers should be avoided; however, a cueing mechanism of some sort is important. This enables the tape to be started exactly at a point where it is being edited into another tape. The process of threading tapes should be kept in mind; many people have difficulty with machines of all sorts, even those which are relatively easy to thread.

For permanent studio installations, many of the controls need only be set once and can then be forgotten. To avoid confusion, one approach is to build a small plastic cover which fits over these controls so a new user does not have to concern himself with them. Alternatively, he could simply be told that they have been preset and need not be touched. Included in this category are input levels, playback levels, etc.

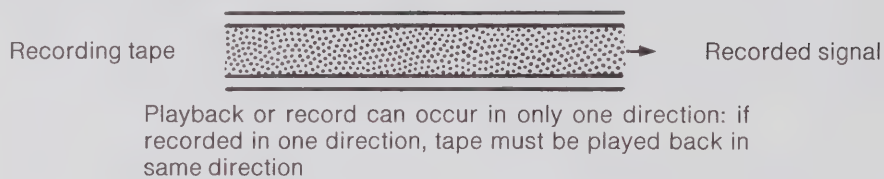
MICROPHONES

Inexpensive broadcast microphones which both provide good-quality signals and are exceptionally rugged are available for under \$100. Some of the more recent additions to the market are condenser microphones which are somewhat more sensitive, but more expensive than regular microphones, making it easier for a community programmer to set up the microphone to pick up a good quality signal.

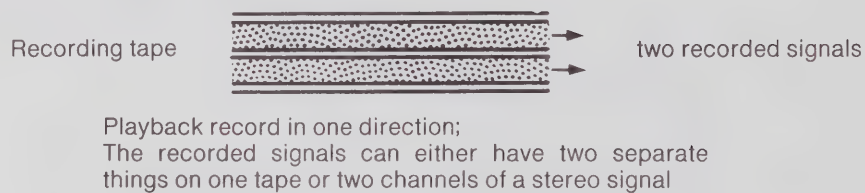
Miking is one of the more difficult operations a community programmer will have to do to produce a programme. The proper positioning of microphones in any situation can be inhibiting to participants, and exasperating to inexperienced equipment operators. Microphones should be placed, generally, close to the

Figure 1

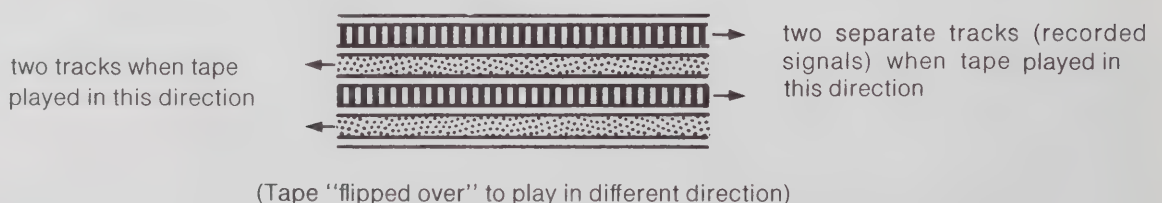
1. Single-track recording
broadcast tape recorders (monaural)



2. Two-track recording (also called "dual track" or "double track") broadcast tape recorders (stereo)



3. Four-track recording Used extensively in home tape recorders



mouths of discussion participants to eliminate background noise (about four to six inches away). Unfortunately, this proximity tends to inhibit inexperienced programme participants. In addition, often participants turn their heads during the course of a conversation and thereby change the distance of their mouths from the microphone. Two special pieces of equipment can help this situation somewhat: condensor microphones and automatic gain control mixers. Condensor microphones, which need not be "throttled" as closely to a speaker, tend to be less subject to this problem, and also the problem of breathing noises and distortion of loud points in speech. Automatic gain controls compensate for changes in speaker position by adjusting the input level of the mixer essentially doing automatically what a skilled operator would be able to do.

Microphones are often available with special built-in wind screens and "pop" filters. Wind screens are quite necessary if microphones are to be used outdoors, otherwise, the wind blowing across the microphone diaphragm produces an irritatingly audible sound. A piece of foam rubber taped over the microphone will to a certain degree do the job of a wind filter, but it tends to muffle the signal somewhat more than a manufactured set of mechanical filters would. Because most condensor microphones require external power supplies, they tend not to be useful for outdoor work.

MIXERS

The mixer is a key part of any studio arrangement. It accepts a number of inputs, various devices such as turntables, tape decks, microphones—and gives the operator control over how loud each will be with respect to the other, as well as the overall level. The loudness or intensity is extremely important in audio work. If two people are in a discussion, each with a microphone, and one person is closer to his microphone than the other, this person's voice would tend to drown out the other person's. Adjusting the input level of each microphone can compensate for this. The overall intensity of the signal is also extremely important, whether the programme is being taped or sent live over the air. In both cases, because of the nature of tape recorders and transmission equipment, there is an optimum signal level. If the signal becomes any louder, distortion occurs; if the signal becomes substantially quieter, then the background noise (an irritating hiss) becomes more noticeable, that is, it becomes louder with respect to the signal. The meter on a mixer gives the operator an indication of what the actual signal level is compared to the optimum signal level.

A simple four-input mixer of broadcast quality which takes signals from up to four microphones and combines them at various levels to be fed into a portable tape recorder or a cassette machine can be purchased for upwards of \$100. On the other hand, the minimal requirements for an on-air studio would probably be met by a five- or six-input mixer costing about \$1000 to \$1500. Such a mixer could simultaneously handle two turntables, two tape decks, and two microphones.

Except for simple mixers, most mixers have provisions for what is called a cue channel (Fig. 2). This basically allows the operator to hear a particular input without actually putting it on the air. The cue system enables an operator to position a record or tape exactly at the point he wants it to start while another record or tape is playing. Sometimes this is done by means of a small speaker, sometimes by means of feeding the cue signal into the headphones the operator is wearing. The cue system is probably the most complicated part of a mixer board for a new user to be able to learn, and most manufacturers have not simplified the arrangement.

There are a number of means by which the operator puts a tape recorder or turntable on a cue function so he can listen without having it go on air. Once a device is on cue, it usually goes to a separate cue volume control. This can be confusing, because if the cue volume connects to a separate cue speaker, the operator is likely to hear both the device being cued and the on-air signal at the same time. Professionals would argue that this enables the operator to always hear what is going on-air while he is setting up the next record or tape, but for the non-professional, hearing two things at once is both confusing and frustrating. The cue function as described, although useful, is not as necessary for tape-only studio situations as it is with live on-air systems.

Often, mixers are set up so that more than one device can be fed into an individual level control, but not at the same time (Fig. 3). This saves costs by reducing the number of "pots" (level controls) needed, but tends to add to the confusion a new user experiences. The best alternative is to try to have one level control doing one thing only, if economically possible.

Some more elaborate mixers have the capability of originating more than one programme at the same time (more than one "programme system" or "programme channel"). These mixers are ideal for professional broadcasters who wish to have an operator produce commercials and run a radio programme at the same time, but only serve to add to the confusion if the user isn't highly experienced. Boards with more than one programme line are not very useful for community broadcasting.

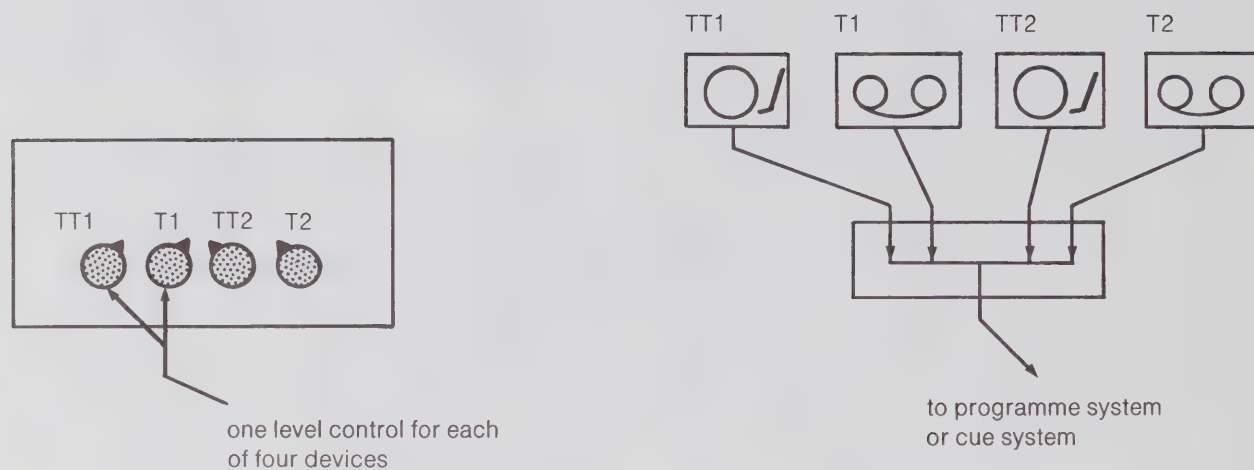
AUTOMATIC GAIN CONTROLS

Recently, audio circuits which automatically control the level of microphone channels have been introduced to mixers. Basically, the circuit turns up the level during low passages and decreases it during peaks, doing automatically what a skilled operator would do. There are advantages to controlling levels manually (easier to permit a signal to have more "dynamic range"), but it may be desirable to enable an inexperienced operator merely to push a button to turn on a microphone and forget about the level of that microphone. (It is possible to devise circuits which compromise between manual control and automatic control; these circuits appear as

Figure 2

Two ways of feeding in four devices

1. Conventional (preferable)



2. "Doubling up" (commonly used but not desirable)

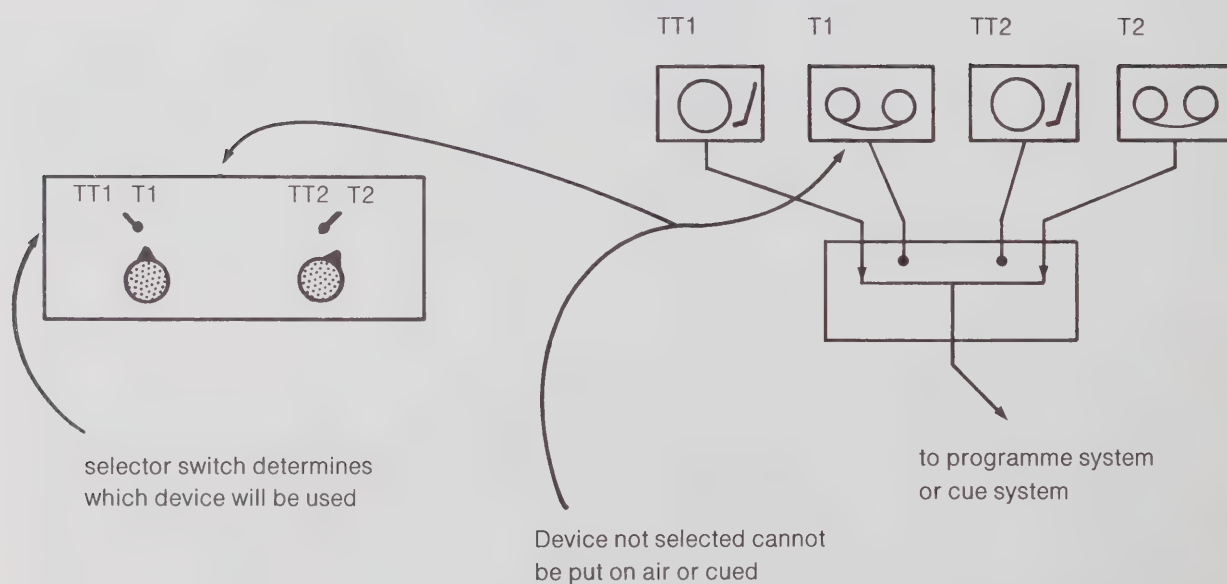
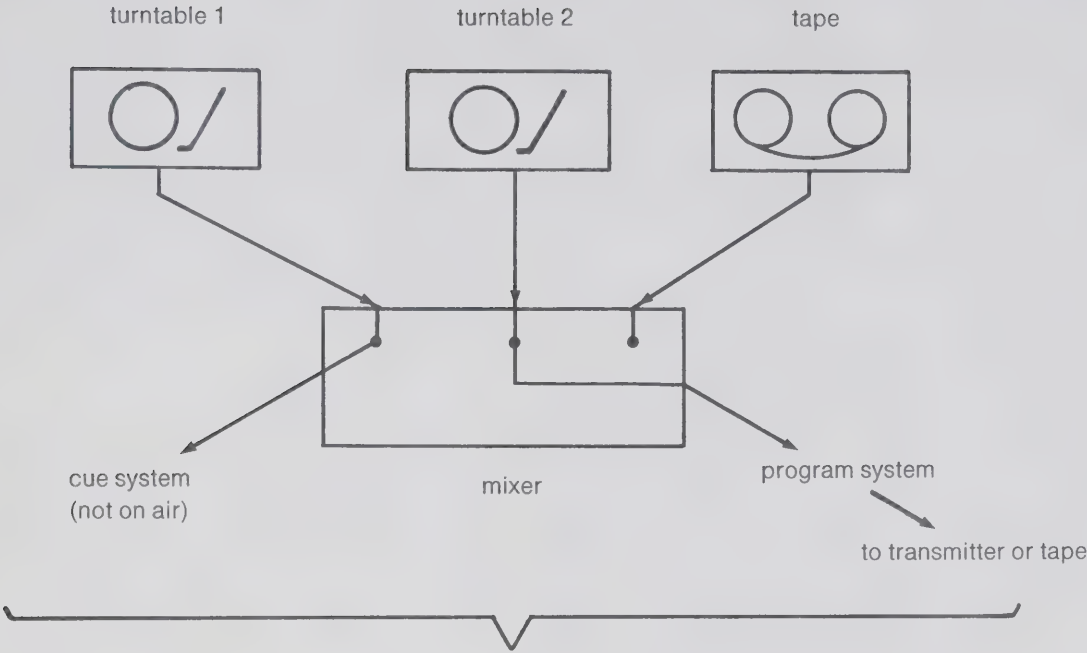
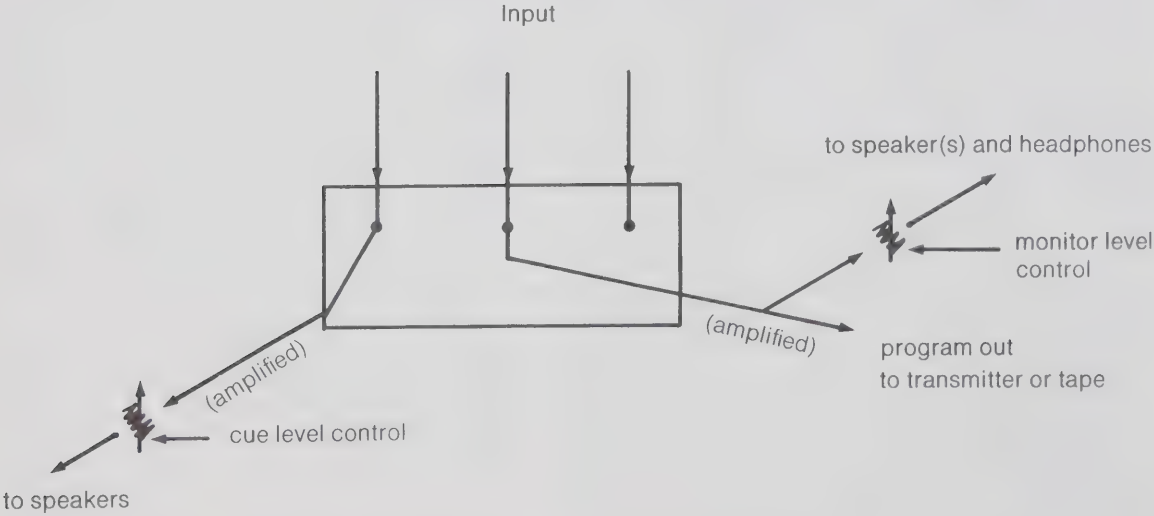


Figure 3



Turntable 2 is playing record which is on-air. Operator can set up record on turntable 1 by listening to it on "cue" system.



Neither "cue" volume nor "programme monitor" volume controls affect outgoing signal

manual control but have automatic level control circuits watching over the operator.) If a portable mixer, usually without a cue system, is being used to record (or relay) a public meeting or live music concert, even the most professional of operators will have difficulty adjusting levels, so a mixer with automatic level capabilities is highly desirable.

Inexpensive (\$500-\$1000) and portable compressor-mixers are becoming available commercially. These mixers could either feed a programme into a tape recorder or relay a programme down a telephone broadcast line to be put on air.

CASSETTE MACHINES

Increasingly, radio stations are using cassette machines for interviews and uses involving human voices for a brief period of time (i.e., things other than complete recordings of hour-long meetings or discussions). Cassette recorders tend to be slightly noisier (in background noise) than reel-to-reel tape recorders, but the quality is still very acceptable in the more expensive (\$100-\$150) versions. And, most important, almost everyone knows how to use a cassette machine. Some of the better quality cassette recorders have built-in automatic gain functions, making use extremely simple.

One way to improve the quality of recordings in many cases is to hook in a broadcast-quality microphone with a cassette recorder. The microphones supplied with cassette machines tend to be of poorer quality than the rest of the machine, and so the use of a better microphone helps substantially.

The biggest problem with the use of cassette machines is that of batteries. Batteries need to be checked constantly by users. Most machines have a built-in battery meter. Better quality cassette machines usually are capable of running from AC power.

A disadvantage of cassette machines is the difficulty of editing with them. Editing is often done by dubbing the cassette tape onto a regular reel-to-reel tape first, and then working with this tape to produce a final edited version.

TAPE CARTRIDGE MACHINES

Tape cartridge machines are expensive (\$1500 for a unit to record and play back tape cartridges, \$900 for a unit which only plays back cartridges). For a basic community radio set-up, they are certainly frills. However, if one could ignore economics, they are extremely useful. Basically, a tape cartridge machine requires only that the operator insert a cartridge and press a button to start (no threading of tapes, and the cartridge automatically stops at the end; since the cartridge is a continuous loop, the end is also the beginning, so the tape can be used again immediately without having to be rewound or reset). Commercial radio stations use cartridges to record and play back commercials. Their ease of use and flexibility makes them quite versatile for everything from messages and announcements to sound effects to local recorded music.

TELEPHONE

The telephone is an important piece of radio broadcasting equipment. The telephone company will usually rent a "patching" device which will enable a telephone line to be plugged into a mixer console and let the person at the other end of the telephone line hear what is going on over the air (meaning anyone in the studio can talk to a person telephoning in through their microphones over the air, and hear him through their headphones). Such a patching device could also be built from parts, requiring only the rental of a conference line extension from the telephone company. More than one telephone line could be installed in this patch system to enable two or more callers to participate in an on-air discussion.

TRANSMITTER EQUIPMENT

Although few community groups or individuals will require knowledge of transmitters, a brief description of their use is presented here. Most of what is described applies to all radio stations and will provide insight into the workings of your local radio station. A basic FM transmitter can cost as little as \$3000 (extremely low-power unit). Its effective range will vary with the quality of the antenna package installed and the height at which the antenna(s) is installed. Increasing the height will increase the area covered drastically, while increasing the power of the transmitter will extend the range as well.

A 10 to 40 watt transmitter will, if installed with antennas 100 feet above the average ground level of an area, send a good quality signal to an area with a radius of about 2.5 miles. The transmitter unit would cost \$3000 and antennas another \$1000. A 250-watt transmitter if installed with antennas 100-150 feet high would send a good quality signal to an area with a radius of 7 miles (exact distance in each direction depends on terrain); the transmitter would cost about \$7500 and antennas another \$1000. A 3000 watt transmitter would cost about \$14,000, antennas at least another \$2000, and if the antennas were mounted 300 feet above ground level the signal would travel at least 20 miles. (These figures are approximate, and are designed only for demonstration purposes.) It is possible to increase the quality of the antenna system but decrease the transmitter power with the same net result; a 1000 watt transmitter with 3 bays has roughly the same effective radiated power as a 3000 watt transmitter with one bay.² Also, transmitter power can be decreased if the antenna height is increased. A transmitter providing 40 watts of effective radiated power at 300 feet height will do the same job as one providing 100 watts at 200 feet height, or one providing 500 watts at 100 feet height. Of course, most radio stations radiate a good deal more power than those described in the dimensions above.

A transmitter package alone will not suffice for FM broadcasting. Department of Communications regulations currently require a couple of monitoring devices and a "limiter" costing \$3500 or more in total. This

applies for any transmitting operation, no matter how large or small.

CONNECTING STUDIO WITH TRANSMITTER

Unless the transmitter is in the same building as the studio, some means will have to be found to get the broadcast signal from the studio to the transmitter.

In addition to this need, a remotely located transmitter has another requirement. Unless a technician is to be on duty at the transmitter site during any hours it is broadcasting, remote control and monitoring equipment is necessary. But some means must be found to get the transmitter's monitoring back to the studio and get the remote control impulses to the transmitter.

A control line (for remote control functions), and a broadcast line (for the actual broadcast signal) can be rented from the telephone company as a special service. Sometimes the quality of telephone lines varies and is subject to day-to-day changes; these usually do not affect remote control functions, but slightly audible "clicks" might be heard over the lines, or the high-frequency characteristics of a broadcast line might drop somewhat.

LOCATION WORK

The mechanics of relaying live programming from a community location back to the studio to be put directly on-air is similar to that of linking the studio with the transmitter, except that no control line is needed. The costs for such remote telephone lines are similar, although lower quality lines are available if desired, for example, in situations where only the human voice is used; human speech does not have the frequency range of musical instruments.

One drawback to the use of telephone broadcast lines for such remote broadcasts is that often the order time can exceed a month or two. This means that telephone lines are useful for permanent installations, but cannot be ordered quickly to cover immediate events.

An FM relay unit which includes a transmitter and receiver can be obtained for \$2000 or slightly more, and could serve to transmit broadcast signals back to the studio. These units do not use regular broadcast frequencies, but use commercial allocations not receivable by home tuners. In a few crowded urban areas, all such frequencies are already in use. This FM relay unit can be portable (some can even run from batteries) so that it could be set up almost instantly within a ten to twenty mile radius of the studio. The advantage of this portability is that one such unit, carried from location to location, can do the work of dozens of telephone broadcast lines.

ACOUSTICS

The acoustical properties of a studio room or recording location will substantially alter the properties of the recorded signal and affect the difficulty associated with setting up and operating (mixing) microphones. In

studio situations, this can be controlled by having work done on the room itself. Acoustics is a complicated field, and to build a room or modify an existing room for optimum acoustical properties can be tricky. A series of costly efforts to make walls more soundproof can be rendered ineffectual by a flaw, for example, vibration contact through window sills.

At the very least, studio rooms should tend to minimize echo which is magnified disproportionately when recording with microphones. The simplest means of doing this is to put sound deadeners along the walls or ceilings, which contribute to the "bounce" (echo) of sound. These deadeners can consist of acoustic tiles, or simply blankets or tapestry and rugs on the floor. This also applies to interviews in peoples' houses where a room with carpets and drapes should be chosen in preference to the kitchen.

Preventing sound from adjacent rooms from entering a studio is a problem which is much harder to solve. Technical solutions are available for the problem of sound transmission, but these solutions are often expensive, and results are rarely complete. These solutions include: double doors, double or triple glass windows with cork lining (angled glass), acoustic insulation in walls, the construction of "floating walls" and "floating floors", and so on.

The obvious solution to the problem of sound transmission is simply the reduction of noise in adjacent areas. In situations where there are a number of nearby studios, often there is a limit placed on how high it is possible for the operator to turn up his monitor speakers. This is accomplished by a rather simple alteration to the amplifier circuits. The same can apply to speaker systems for record library audition turntables.

AIR CONDITIONING

Broadcasting control rooms are usually "tight" working areas, with not too much space to spare. Over and above the heat generated by human beings, working in a room which is usually small tends to drive room temperatures very high. The need to close doors for sound reasons impedes normal air circulation and allows cigarette smoke to accumulate. It is not, therefore, uncommon for air conditioning plants to be run even late in the fall in some studio locations.

A simple room air conditioner may work as a temporary solution, but these machines tend to generate too much noise to be useful. The advice of an air conditioning specialist or engineer is desirable for this situation. Acoustic dampers are available for installation in ducts to prevent sound from easily travelling from one room to the next where a central air conditioning plant and/or fan system is used. Air conditioning or circulation systems have been known to defeat the purpose of thousands of dollars of soundproofing work to separate two rooms.

USED EQUIPMENT

The most likely source of used equipment is established broadcasters. Television stations as well as radio stations will probably have equipment. Most broadcast stations have at least some used equipment in storage somewhere which is rarely used and might be obtained inexpensively. In some cases, equipment might only be marginally worth repairing, but often equipment is rejected not because of maintenance problems but rather because the broadcast outlet wants the flexibility of more expensive equipment (especially mixers) which the station previously wasn't able to afford. Small mixers and microphones are the pieces of equipment most likely to be available, turntables the least likely. Electronics manufacturers may also have obsolete equipment still on the shelves which might be acquired inexpensively. As with any used equipment, replacement parts may be harder to find, but generally this concern does not apply to microphones and mixers which almost entirely use electronic parts general to all designs and which are readily available for replacement purposes.

BUILDING YOUR OWN

Very few pieces of audio equipment can be built with the resources of anything less than a full-scale manufacturing concern. Exceptions to this rule: cabinetry and mixers.

Although mounting cabinets are available commercially for most equipment, generally a broadcasting undertaking would get a local carpenter to custom-build them. This provides an opportunity for some interesting variations. Pedestals can be assigned different colours. The turntable which is controlled by a switch or "pot" coloured blue on the mixer board can have a pedestal coloured blue as well. This avoids a lot of new-user confusion; to turn on the blue turntable one simply hits the blue switch. The colour-coding on the mixer can be done by slight custom alterations or simply putting a coloured strip of tape alongside the mixer controls.

RECORDS

A good library is a valuable resource for a community broadcasting facility. The normal source of records, of course, is the record company. Record companies give licensed radio stations special prices on all records and sometimes give away promotional copies of certain records.

Many community members, especially those involved in programming, will be willing to part with old and sometimes irreplaceable collections for the establishment of a library for a broadcast facility. More often than not, however, few of these records will be usable because of scratches or other deterioration. Ethnic minority groups or other foreign-language programmers may be especially willing to help locate records from the country of the group's cultural origins from within the community, often from people who have

brought records into the country with them. Despite the difficulty in obtaining copies of special interest records free from record companies, it may be possible to build special-interest record libraries quite easily because of the enthusiasm of community members interested in such programming. Before taping and airing, copyrights to such material should be investigated (see above, "Some notes on the law").

TAPES

The standard sources for taped programming are the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (which also releases free disc recordings, largely of classical music for broadcast facilities) and the Canadian Association of Broadcasters. Other community broadcasters may be interested in exchanging tapes, but tape exchanges usually prove unreliable for a number of reasons, one of which is that many community broadcasters are too busy worrying about programming for their own communities to be able to spend time on an exchange system.

An often-neglected source of tapes from within the community itself is that of secondary schools and universities. Often high schools tape major student drama or music productions; these tapes represent a possible source of community programmes although many may not be of broadcast quality. Likewise, universities often tape lectures which might be of interest to community members; such tapes are kept in storage for a considerable length of time.

FINAL NOTES

The use of radio for community broadcasting has a number of clear-cut technical advantages. The magnitude of the cost differences between radio and television equipment alone makes video impractical in many situations where funds are limited. Without a doubt, it seems far more possible for a community broadcaster to be able to launch full-time (that is, more than two or three hours per day) radio than to be able to launch community television programming.

The answer to the "which is best?" question is not, however, simple. Against the problems must be weighed the advantages of video transmission.

Many types of programming simply cannot be understood without a video image, although in practice community broadcasters have found very few video programmes that cannot be adapted to radio.

Audiences may not be accustomed to listening to "serious content" programming on radio, especially since they may have been conditioned to accept radio as a background medium. On the other hand, audiences may not accept the loose production work that occurs both with audio and video community broadcasting, despite technical innovations which help inexperienced programmers to produce professional programmes.

Footnotes

1. Equipment costs referred to throughout this publication are based on 1973 estimates.
2. A bay is a radiating element of the antenna. There may be a number of such elements.

Structuring the time available

J. Richard Bertrand

Scheduling events and activities can often be the most critical, important aspect of a task. This article will place you, the reader, in one of these situations. If you are a member of the community, either an individual or a member of a group who wishes to become involved in community programming, one of the aspects you must be aware of is scheduling. Or if you are a member of a cable company's staff, perhaps you would like some suggestions and ideas on scheduling from other cable operators in Canada.

Scheduling is that phase of community programming encompassing the structuring of time to maximize the use of facilities with the best results. Scheduling can affect on-air presentation (live or taped), in-studio taping, mobile taping, programme planning, editing on premises and off, scheduling community resources, visits, and innumerable other phases of the community programming process.

If you are working in a cable company then you are aware, for example, of all the intricate problems of not having enough time or not having a group show up on time. If you are a member of the community, then you have the problem of getting to the studio on time, having enough opportunity to prepare for your programme, being able to schedule the use of the portapak, or once in studio, having too little or too much content for the programme.

There is a need for scheduling. There is a need for workable schedules that maintain a degree of flexibility.

Perhaps the best way to come to grips with the situation is to use two scenarios. The first relates to cable operators and the second to community groups.

The cable company

The scene is that of a medium-sized cable operator who has had a community programming facility available to his area for over a year. The over-all quality of the equipment is border-line at best, but some equipment is excellent and some equipment should not even be there. Yet this cable operator has tried to put together as many of the pieces of equipment as possible to provide for all the requirements of community groups and individuals.

After a hectic afternoon of non-stop taping, phone calls, meetings with several groups who wish to prepare a programme, and the sending out of key personnel to video tape part of a football game, evening suddenly arrives like a blow.

At 7 p.m. and at 7:30 p.m., two taped programmes follow in succession. Due to flag-waving (picture instability) on one of the programmes and some missed cues on the part of participants, an irate subscriber calls up

asking why that stuff should be on the air. Undaunted, the cable crew and several members of the community prepare for a live programme at 8 p.m. In come the participants at 7:40 p.m. all ready and eager to start. They have a partial script, home-made graphics, and ten minutes of taped insert for their live programme. As 8 p.m. approaches, their guest speaker does not appear so they decide to go on alone.

The programme is on the air, the music was a bit late coming in. Nevertheless, half an hour later, it was an interesting, informative discussion with a tape insert, several slide shots, and an abundance of swinging in chairs. But to the many or few who watched it, it was community programming. It was participation and it worked.

Immediately following the show, the cable crew ask the participants to move to the waiting area. They are not trying to be impolite but rather are rushing to get ready for the next live programme at 9:00 p.m. with members of the German community.

By the end of the day, a tired but contented crew clean up the studio and control room. Last-minute technical adjustments are made and one of the personnel volunteers to come in early the following morning to repair a video tape recorder. The next day, the hectic pace starts over again.

The community group

The community association of a local tenants group had been planning a programme for weeks. They had called the cable company to reserve the portapak. Their next step was to come in and outline their programme, get suggestions, training on the use of the portapak, and a tour around the studio and its facilities so they could become familiar with it. Some outline scripts were given and a project leader assigned. The day of the actual programme, one of the community producers left work early to get together some last minute details. Finally, by 7:40 p.m., they arrive at the studio and wait nervously until their programme is on air. They wonder whether it was all worth it considering the fact that not many people would see the programme. Yet they feel that it was part of communicating to their community and it is important. After all, they had sent a newsletter to all the tenants in their area and they were certain that almost everyone would watch as it was an important topic. The guest does not arrive but on air they go. At the end of the programme, they are relieved it's over but they feel they have accomplished something.

The two scenarios point out that to put all this together required a lot of planning and time on the part of the

cable operator and the community group. This procedure is repeated every day or every evening at various cable companies throughout Canada. In order that the facilities within and outside the company are used to peak efficiency and as many groups as possible participate, scheduling is imperative: not so much scheduling programme times but scheduling human and technical resources.

Scheduling

1. ON-AIR

Experience over the years seems to indicate that a combination of the completely open schedule and the rigid schedule is necessary. By a completely open schedule I mean one in which the only thing that is fixed is the starting time for programming. The rigid schedule calls for programmes designed for 15 minutes, half-hour, or hour time slots, all structured without much flexibility.

Many systems now seem to use a combination. In most cases, they have a standard starting time and the majority of programmes are in standard time slots with fixed lengths. On the other hand, many slots are left open-ended so that the programme can be of any duration depending on input, interest, and other factors. In addition, some facilities provide entire evenings of open-ended programmes, and couple them with repetition of programmes on a later day or on weekends or on alternate days. No matter what, a schedule of some nature is required.

In most areas across Canada where facilities do exist, local newspapers or listing guides tend to print the schedule of programmes for cable companies. If you are a programme participant and would like to ensure that your programme information is listed, then it is a good idea to plan the content of the show some time ahead so that information can be properly included. Let your cable company know about this.

2. IN-STUDIO (TAPE OR LIVE)

A fairly efficient cable system should, in addition to its on-air studio, have an in-studio schedule since most companies have both taped and live shows. Some companies have a schedule which runs seven days, others have only specific days on which they tape so that other times are left open for such things as mobiles, studio and equipment upkeep, and training of groups.

Experience seems to indicate that those programme participants who are involved with organizations or groups, and who have as one of their tasks the requirement to communicate with the public, can take time during the day to tape or do a live show. On the other hand, most programmers who are not in this position but do take part in community programming tend to use the evening time slots. This does not mean that on-air

schedules reflect this but rather that taping times tend to fall into different categories.

If you are a programme participant, ask for times that are available and see if there is one that is most suitable to your needs. Do not forget to take your guest into consideration.

Cable companies should have a separate schedule for studio use so that times are blocked out for purposes of taping, live on-air, training, building sets, and so on.

3. PROGRAMME PLANNING

Programme planning applies to both cable systems and to programme participants. The programme director or coordinator, or whatever his or her title, will most likely want to talk to the groups requesting time and to those wishing to review their programme ideas. If the programme is completely operated and supervised by a community group, then the same programme planning time must be set aside. This is a very important aspect since very often time spent in planning more often than not shows in the quality of the programme. Outlines of formats can be discussed and tours around the studio to familiarize become very important. Flexibility and time available is also important so that activities do not start backing up in the event someone does not show up or equipment breaks down.

4. EDITING

Edited programmes are not common in the field of community programming. There are two reasons for this. First, the equipment in most cable facilities is not commensurate with good quality edits. Second, and very important, there is not that much time available to do edits properly, if at all. Since the editing and playback equipment provided in a cable facility is usually the same, it must be tied in with the overall use of the studio and the control room.

Some companies have found that when their studio facilities are not in use, they can provide individuals to supervise and assist groups in editing their programmes. Others have found that this has not been required.

The other possibility is to use facilities other than those provided by a cable company. These can be available from community colleges, universities, industry, and so on. It is important for both the cable operator and the community participants to assess the overall capabilities of a community.

5. MOBILE TAPING

The term mobile has meant many things in the field of cable programming, from two-camera facilities to the use of portapak. A lot of cable companies which started out with a mobile vehicle have returned to in-studio only. Others have gone from mobile vehicles to portapaks and still others use only the portable video equipment available.

To the community participant this can be very frustrating. At times one can go out with a portapak and tape a programme, only to come back and find that something was wrong technically. But persistence and experience tend to remove these problems, and effective use has been made of the portable equipment available. On the other hand, many community groups feel cable companies should do more to provide mobile facilities and they do not understand why cable operators cannot do so.

Unfortunately, once equipment is wired into a studio facility, it becomes increasingly difficult to strip it down, place it in a vehicle and bring it elsewhere. Very often, this means that only one programme can be done on a given date since the studio becomes inoperative. Completely separate mobile facilities have proven to be a very expensive proposition and as such are rare. These require almost as much equipment as a studio facility and often, cable companies find they cannibalize their studio facility to provide mobiles.

The community participant should learn what is available from a cable company and ensure that he has reserved the equipment.

Community resources

Maximizing the use of facilities within a community should be the ultimate goal of both cable operators and community participants. Communications within a community should not only be the responsibility of the two groups just mentioned. In addition, government, industry, and municipalities can attempt, where possible, to provide people and equipment to assist in the overall expansion of the communications process in a given area.

Unfortunately, in some areas where either cable operators or community participants have approached some of the sources just mentioned, there seems to be a hands-off attitude. On the other hand, a conscientious effort should lead with time to greater availability of this type of facility.

One community college has just equipped itself with a complete colour mobile studio facility and discussions are now underway to have not only programmes provided by this group but to have facilities available both to the community participants and the cable operators. Students from this college have already used their facility to tape the local high school football championships. The results were given to the cable companies in Ottawa and played back on their systems.

It is important that these facilities, when they are available in an area, be scheduled for the overall capability of that community. It must be remembered that if there are more and more outside facilities which can be used, more people will participate, more hours of programming can be provided, better programmes result, and more satisfaction can be obtained.

One community resource that many cable operators tend to forget is that of the local groups themselves.

Arrangements for training local groups and co-ordinating production courses already available in communities should be pursued where possible. In areas where groups do want to have this capability and can provide it, cable companies should try as much as possible to assist. On the other hand, local educational institutions can help by providing community programming courses.

One method for involving community groups while not requiring them to take a full course is to use the concept of programme scouts. This was initiated by Ottawa Cablevision and their community. The concept is to have one or more people who in their spare time assist the community in providing programmes on air. They spread out the participation of groups and act as in-community access sources. They can be trained by a cable television company so that they are fully conversant with the equipment and techniques available. The concept can be carried out on a volunteer basis, on a pay-per-programme basis, or on a stipend given weekly or monthly. This is a concept which can assist the cable operator and the participants.

Experiences across Canada

A questionnaire was sent out to a representative group of cable companies, from Campbell River, BC to New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. The following summaries of scheduling experiences are presented as practical examples.

K-VISION SERVICES, NEW GLASGOW, NOVA SCOTIA

New Glasgow tends to use the regular time slots primarily, with replays scheduled after favourable audience reaction. Some general interest programmes have been replayed as many as six times. Studio taping takes place in the afternoons with the replays in the evening.

For programme planning, they depend on the community. There is very little editing. Being a small system, they tend not to use schedule forms but instead aim to "fill in the cracks" where usual broadcast schedules might be slow. For instance, if there were a large number of sports programmes in a given day, an alternative would be offered.

There are no other local facilities for programming available in the community. Programmes are listed in the TV guide section of both local papers, as they were in most of the systems surveyed.

TELEVISION COMMUNAUTAIRE DE QUEBEC, QUEBEC CITY

In Quebec City, the schedule is related directly to the working hours of their personnel and to the community demand. Complex programmes are placed at the end of an evening of programming with ordinary slots taped in the afternoon. The schedule alternates between live on-air programmes and taped shows. Programme time slots are allocated on a first-come first-served basis.

Quebec feels that coordinating their facilities and the community is the major problem. For this reason, they have prepared an in-depth outline of what community programming is, how people get involved, what equipment is available, the scheduling of the programme, and any other important considerations. This is made available to all.

Télévision Communautaire de Québec found it mandatory to demand a certain discipline from participants while still allowing a certain amount of flexibility. For this reason, a series of forms have been developed in which community participants give progress reports on their programming leading up to a final outline form which is approved by the co-ordinator.

Quebec City has had a certain amount of success in using local university and school equipment for television programming. They also provide training in the form of video workshops and communications discussion groups.

TRANSVISION MAGOG, MAGOG, QUEBEC

Magog presents 50% of their programming live on-air, and 50% taped (30% their own local origination and 20% from the local television station). For this reason, the scheduling is mainly directed to the coordination of live productions. They do not utilize mobiles extensively but are planning on expanding portapak use.

For programme planning, the format is laid out in the fall and then modified slightly throughout the rest of the season. There is no editing and there are no local schools or colleges with facilities to assist in production.

The following scheduling forms are used: press release with a schedule of programmes; weekly booking of studio facilities; daily booking of studio facilities; approximate programming outline; weekly schedule.

The use of these forms depends on the amount of equipment available, whether it is a mobile or in-studio taping, the number of programmes that week, the amount of requests during that time period, and the number of people available to work on the programme. When the arrangements are such that time is very tight or when there is poor communication between participants and the cable television company, or there is an inability to cope with delays or prior arrangements, problems occur.

One of the important aspects of programming in Magog is continually updating schedules so that nothing is forgotten or left out.

Although there are no definite schedules for training local groups, they give courses upon demand.

Their closing comments indicate that there is no one formula for coordination of community programming but rather a capability to adapt to the various types of productions.

CORNWALL CABLEVISION, CORNWALL, ONTARIO

Cornwall Cablevision uses very flexible approaches toward scheduling and is not locked into any specific forms. Being a bilingual community, the staff work in both languages. Some difficulties have been encountered with groups coming in at the last minute to promote a community project and therefore they have adopted an open-studio taping concept. Mobiles are mainly restricted to sports produced by the cable company. Although there are no specific days for editing, it is permitted on an ad hoc basis.

Originally they felt that when scheduling formats were established, deviations became a problem and created mistakes. The coordination of people, equipment, and space mainly depends on space since it determines the number of people you can put on a set, the type of programme, the set design, and the mobility of the cameras. Their programme listings are mentioned in their evening newscasts.

SCARBOROUGH CABLE, SCARBOROUGH, ONTARIO

Scarborough Cable has followed traditional lines with women's and children's programmes in the afternoon, news at 6 p.m. and adults' and teen programmes until 9 p.m. The general pattern is to give professional, public relations, and social agencies time during the day. All others tape at night. One of the problems that results from this is to properly schedule staff. Mobile taping depends on equipment, manpower, and studio commitments. Portapaks are used at the same time as the studio is being used and they prefer this technique.

If a group has not pre-planned the programme, then production time increases to the point where one group begins to use another group's slotted time.

Scarborough provides separate half-inch editing facilities and this allows them to use one-inch and half-inch editing simultaneously. They indicate that editing is time-consuming and leeway must be allowed before scheduling the next group.

Some of the main problems that they encounter occur when two groups want the same time slot or when tapes are not available and substitutions have to be made. Playback schedules are prepared at least two weeks in advance.

They emphasized that it does not pay to overbook facilities because this leads to stress on the staff and community participants. Time should be left aside to check out equipment before it is passed on to the next person.

Large group programmes, such as dancing shows in a small studio, tend to cause difficulties and frustration. In effect, one should know the capabilities of one's studio.

The public library system has portapaks which are made available from time to time. Local universities and high school TV facilities are provided for student use only. Scarborough is working on greater cooperation.

They utilize students and teachers in the various communications classes to train community groups. Each night a different group works as a team for one evening only. There is little TV production being taught to community groups through other sources.

Schedules are published in the large local daily newspapers and in the local weekly. The Scarborough library system displays the cable system's schedules in the library branches.

The cable television system is currently experimenting with alternating evening time slots with different groups. Every other week a regular group is responsible for a programme. This way they allocate the same time to two groups.

ROGERS CABLE TV, TORONTO, ONTARIO

Rogers uses the access studio concept. Groups book the studio on a regular basis and can have between one to four hours for a programme. They have three portapaks and a complete half-inch editing facility. In addition, groups can go "live" if they want. All coordination is done with a person assigned to lead the groups.

The problems they have found are: breakdown in the studio due to inadequate technical knowledge; groups occasionally forgetting to deliver their tapes to the playback operator in time; inadequate technical quality; occasional failure of people to playback the programmes.

In addition to the access studio, Rogers has a second studio for the production of cable and community-produced programmes.

There are countless resources available in Toronto but almost none are available to community groups or the cable television company. There are some video centres and these are available some of the time, but the problem of access to them has not been resolved.

In Rogers' own access studios, there are regular training sessions on a weekly basis.

Graham Cable, another Toronto system, in co-operation with Humber College, has run formal courses in community programming.

HAMILTON CABLE TV, HAMILTON, ONTARIO

Cable 8 has found that it must follow a very strict pattern of scheduling for both the operational and viewers' benefit. Programmes must be scheduled and planned well in advance to allow for as much preparation before taping as possible.

In addition, they find it important for locations to be well surveyed in advance before mobiles are sent in. Although they try to remain flexible, schedules must be planned.

Programme schedules are set three months in advance with the exception of news and interview spots. The aim

is a balance between long- and short-term expectations.

Outside production facilities are available and several community groups do produce away from the studio. In addition to this, Hamilton Cable operates its own training programmes.

Community television listings are published in the local newspapers and via the channel.

COMMUNITY ANTENNA TELEVISION, CALGARY, ALBERTA

Calgary Community Antenna Television attempts to work on a first-come first-served basis entirely. A programme is rarely altered although they have in several special situations pre-empted regular programmes in order to accommodate specials.

They try to retain a regular weekly programme schedule which is tied together with the assistance of community people. In order to have the flexibility of being able to include last minute programmes, there are built-in TBA's (to be announced) under various titles.

It is first-come first-served for tapings with several programmes having block bookings for studio and editing time. When some groups cannot be accommodated, arrangements are made elsewhere, for example, with the other cable company in the area or through one of the educational institutions.

With a full colour facility, mobile tapings are a little more cumbersome and require more pre-planning and scheduling.

Although editing is handled in the morning, groups are discouraged from attempting extensive editing because of the lack of time. On the other hand, proper programme planning allows groups to record programmes in sequence so that at most an assembly job is required.

The scheduling of community resources is working out quite well and there is a good working arrangement with local community colleges and volunteers.

Calgary uses a regular broadcast log which is a five-part form organizing the programme schedule in standard fashion. One typed form is used weekly for studio and mobile tapings as well as for the group schedule.

Individuals are trained by the cable station, and students from the local college have participated in some of the cable television programmes. In addition, the programme director of the cable television company has been invited to teach one or two classes at the college.

Schedules are published in the newspapers and local TV guide. The programme director contributes articles to the local TV supplement.

CALGARY CABLE TV, CALGARY, ALBERTA

Calgary Cable TV favours the concept of slotting taped programmes between live shows to provide bridges during which they can set up and prepare for the next programme.

Some programmes lend themselves to the tape format more readily than to a live one. This requires an operating schedule with Monday evenings and Saturday afternoons set aside exclusively for the production of taped products. Tuesday evenings are reserved for work on special projects, editing, and so on. They are booked on a first-come first-served basis or on a regular basis for a programme series. Wednesday nights are reserved for training classes conducted by the staff and are intended for interested people from the community who wish to learn about television production.

Calgary Cable has a completely separate two-camera mobile which is scheduled on its own. It is staffed by a part-time employee who is in charge of a group of volunteers. Mobiles include a two-hour sports event each week and a two-hour production about a local social event or happening. It is coordinated by the programme director.

The programme director feels it important not to schedule community programming opposite television programmes that are on commercial stations. Ninety-nine per cent of the time it is a losing battle. Instead, the scheduling should be for the convenience of those who will be interested in that particular subject.

They arrange their trained people into separate crews to work on a series of programmes. Sometimes, for a one-shot affair, the group or individuals cannot supply crews and Calgary Cable TV has a standby crew available each evening. These are trained volunteers.

They also schedule trained volunteers who run the master controls with each person assigned to a specific evening and totally responsible for the on-air look of the channel. The use of imagination is encouraged for station breaks and each master control volunteer must use his own ideas and material to fill five-minute gaps between programmes.

Calgary Cable feels that organized, active training courses are a very important part of community programming. They have found success in training individuals who form groups for programming with others they have met in their classes.

Programmes are listed in local television guides and in the newspaper.

CAMPBELL RIVER TV ASSOCIATION, CAMPBELL RIVER, BC

The Campbell River cablevision outlet is a community-owned facility with one full-time programme director. The remaining programming staff is composed of part-time students and volunteers.

Although the programme director believes that one should not slot times opposite commercial stations, community access programmes are aired when there is as little local competition as possible.

Programmes are scheduled during four days from Tuesday to Friday with the facility open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., seven days a week. Campbell River TV is currently considering dedicating Saturdays to programme repetition.

In-studio taping is usually done daily from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. but most programmes are live. Extensive use is made of the portapaks and there is very little editing.

Campbell River's School District 72 has a resource centre which the cable television company can use. The centre transmits educational television programmes from the province of British Columbia and outside sources such as the Ontario Educational Communications Authority. The resource centre records programmes on videocassette and plays them back on request over two cable channels made available for this purpose.

Although the centre does not have television studio facilities, there is cross-cooperation with the cable company on the sharing of various types of equipment and assistance. As the name suggests, the resource centre also provides a library and other facilities.

There is good cooperation with local media with the radio and newspapers providing input to the programming.

Campbell River uses daily and weekly logs and script sheets. Programmes are allowed to run overtime if required. Training courses are given frequently and the programme director gives a continuing education course in programming.

A unique concept was initiated by Campbell River TV whereby they would send out a weekly schedule to subscribers for an additional 50 cents per month. Although this idea did not get off the ground due to lack of response and little publicity, it is anticipated that this may be attempted again when the Association has the staff to provide the service.

Community radio

The rules for scheduling community radio are basically the same as those for community television. The big advantage, of course, is that one need not worry about the complexities of video production. On the other hand, radio does not allow for long pauses and, therefore, must be organized in a tighter fashion.

In the future it is possible that radio will be as much a part of community communications as cable television is. Currently, some groups use some of the free time on the community channel to present radio programmes.

In Ottawa for example, Living Radio Vivante, a non-profit organization, prepares and presents a weekly community radio programme. However, less on-air time

becomes available for such facilities as community television expands.

In the future, use may be made of FM channels for community programming. It should be remembered that community radio may very well be the answer to a lot of overall scheduling problems. Many groups who want to present programmes which are merely discussions or interviews would be better off using community radio. This would free more television time for those areas where visual impact is important.

Some tips and suggestions

SCHEDULES

Although every community has its own requirements, some basic schedules and programme forms or outlines are required. Basically one needs:

- weekly block timetable for programmes
- daily block timetable for studio and control room use
- in-depth programme information for local media
- daily programme log
- block timetable for booking of equipment
- outline requirements for programme participants.

Programme information should be provided to the local media, libraries, and aired on the system's own channel. In addition, some companies provide a telephone

number where a person or a recording gives programme information.

If you are a cable television company, look to part-time and volunteer people to become experts in your operation. They will go out into the community to search out groups and topics. Have these people assist in the schedule outline.

If you are a community group, have your cable television company set some time aside for training even if it is only to familiarize yourself with the equipment.

FLEXIBILITY OF SCHEDULING

Too many situations arise in which additional projects or last-minute programmes cannot be taken on when there is a real need that they be programmed immediately. The rigid attitude lends itself well to an organized facility but if it cannot be easily modified, innovative programming might not surface.

Flexibility also is a key word for participants who tend to be rigid in their demands. The overall effect is a sense of non-cooperation on both sides. Here, it is very important that flexibility can in fact be planned for. Open-ended schedules, programme pre-emption (some groups don't mind a day off now and then), open studio taping periods, evenings for specials, can all be pre-arranged. The danger is that too much time can be used, reducing the chances to do other things.

There is no easy answer to the problem of scheduling flexibility, except that it must be an attitude expressed by both the cable television company and the programme participant.

Cable television programming technology

W.G. Pither

The concepts of communication have been set forth in other chapters here, but what is the situation regarding the equipment to do the job? The tools are adequate. Admittedly, they are not as massive and complex as the hardware of conventional television, but they are capable of putting your ideas into sound and pictures. It has been proven time and time again that the equipment available through your local community origination studio and other agencies can influence, stimulate, and involve the audience. Let's begin by discussing the type of equipment you will probably use; examine its strong points; and discuss its shortcomings.

Perhaps the most highly portable and widely used piece of apparatus today is the portapak, available for under \$2000. This black and white combination offers a camera with automatic gain control for the picture and a form of automatic volume control on the self-contained microphone; it feeds into a one-half inch portable video tape recorder. The camera operator is free of concern for aperture settings to meet varying light conditions and control of sound input to the recorder, in order that he may concentrate on capturing the often spontaneous sound and motion of his subject.

The portapak can be operated from its self-contained battery, giving thirty to forty minutes of operation in the field, or alternatively, from a 110-volt source. External longer-life batteries are also available.

Smooth edits cannot be made in the field with the portapak since starting and stopping the tape transport mechanism will introduce a disruption of the picture and flash a disconcerting "glitch" or break-up of the picture on the viewing apparatus. If the portapak is to be used to prepare a varied and complex programme, editing will best be done later in a control room setting with the help of experienced personnel. Editing techniques and modifications to apparatus will be discussed in a later portion of this chapter.*

In a field dominated by the Japanese, makers such as Sony, Shibaden, Panasonic, Akai, and others all produce combination camera-recorders in a price range from \$1000 to \$2000. Most of these incorporate as many automatic features as possible in order that the operator can concentrate on his subject. While most packages are in the black and white mode, there are several available capable of colour reproduction. These cost considerably more than black and white and introduce new problems in maintenance over and above those which may be expected from black and white.

Video tape recorders are manufactured by a number of companies. Here again, in the low-cost field, the Japanese manufacturers seem to dominate. They vary from one-quarter-inch to two-inch in tape size, and are often capable of colour performance.

There is no one standard size or make used from coast to coast in Canada but one can usually find a one-inch machine of some manufacture in the local cable studio. Common brands are Sony, International Video Corporation (abbreviated to IVC), Ampex, and Shibaden. Prices range from about \$3000 for simple black and white machines, to about \$40,000 or \$50,000 for one-inch machines with colour and editing facilities. Some of the more expensive models may have time base correction to guarantee stable picture reproduction.

The one-inch machines as offered by various manufacturers present a country-wide problem. Although they all use one-inch tape, the recording standards are quite different. A one-inch Sony tape cannot be played on a one-inch IVC or Ampex machine and vice versa.

If you are making a programme for use on another cable television system, make sure that there is compatibility of machines. If this compatibility does not exist, someone will have to make a "dub" or copy of the original tape in the format of the system wishing to replay the tape. One party to the operation must have access to both makes of video tape recorder. It is usually desirable to have an original tape when possible, since some of the picture quality is lost when a copy is made. The first copy is called a second generation tape. A copy made of a second generation tape would be called a third generation. A marked degradation of quality can be observed from generation to generation.

All of the video tape recorders we have discussed thus far use a helical scan recording principle and have one slight fault in common. Unless they are governed by a time base corrector, they show a tendency to cause wiggle in the first few lines from the top of the picture frame. While this "flag waving" may not seem objectionable on a closed circuit monitor, it sometimes becomes more severe when the tape is broadcast on a cable television system, particularly on some brands of TV receivers. Most one-inch machines have tension or skew controls to reduce this characteristic, although they never can completely cure the slight horizontal jitter.

All of the machines mentioned above operate on the reel-to-reel principle. Like an audio tape machine, they have to be threaded, sometimes under dim light conditions, a bit of a time consumer. Introduced recently on the market are several varieties of recorders operating on the cassette principle. Here you simply pop the loaded cartridge into the pocket on the machine, shift a lever, and it is ready to play or record. The first of these to be offered was made by Sony and introduced yet another tape size, this time, three quarters of an inch. This format offers increased stability over half-inch tape

* Throughout this publication, various types and makes of equipment are mentioned, especially the most widely used portable VTR equipment known as the portapak. It is not the intention of this publication to endorse any particular make or manufacture of equipment (editor).

and includes colour capability as a plus. Other manufacturers were quick to follow, and now videocassette machines are manufactured by Panasonic, J.V.C. Industries (not to be confused with IVC), and others. These semi-automatic tape recorders without camera cost a little more than the lowest priced combinations of camera and recorder—somewhere in the price range of \$1500 to \$2000. They offer simplicity and convenience to the operator. Their mechanism, in common with most video apparatus, is complex; they must be operated and serviced with care if they are to give the reliable service of which they are capable.

International Video Corporation has recently offered a one-inch video cartridge recorder to the market. It is more expensive than the three-quarter-inch models; called VCR 100, it costs between \$3000 and \$4000.

It is not the intention of this chapter to examine all the video tape recorders available today or likely to be available in the future, but to discuss generally the makes and models you might expect to find in your community. They are all usable under most conditions and can give good results.

There are many cameras which might be teamed up with any of the recorders mentioned. Cameras are not specified by metric or other measurements although we sometimes talk about “doing an assignment with a one-inch camera.” This means feeding an available camera into a one-inch video tape machine.

There is an enormous range of cameras available, from the simplest fixed-lens black and white industrial camera up to the sophisticated three-gun colour job. And there is almost as great a range in price. Some technicians obtain low-price industrial cameras and modify them for fixed-shot use in studio operation. There is much room to improvise and make-do in the field, and there are ingenious adaptations to meet special needs.

There are many satisfactory cameras available. They will be equipped with either vidicon or plumbicon camera tubes. The difference between the vidicon and plumbicon, aside from price, is that the plumbicon is much more light-sensitive. It can produce good crisp pictures under conditions in which the vidicon gives less sharp rendition and without the wide range of black to white. The vidicon also exhibits a tendency to “smear” on a rapid pan shot. The plumbicon will not smear when operated correctly and generally produces a picture with a much cleaner appearance. One drawback of the plumbicon is its tendency to “flare” on very bright objects. A plumbicon tube costs about three times as much as a vidicon tube and produces a picture commensurate with the extra cost.

Black and white cameras range in cost from about \$200 for the cheapest vidicon-equipped, to around \$7000 for cameras with plumbicons and many extra features. Colour cameras manufactured for community TV range from \$3000 to about \$35,000. Consequently, not all local cable television companies are equipped with full colour facilities, and it is still considered a

luxury in community programming except on the larger systems.

Most cameras today come with some form of zoom lens to enable a range of shots from close-up to wide angle. For community programming, a lens with a 10 to 1 ratio is very useful. Before you use a camera equipped with lever- or cable-operated zoom and focus capabilities, give it a good workout so your final shots will be smooth and clear.

If more than one camera is being used to produce a programme, they should be controlled by a video switcher. A television picture is composed of thirty different pictures per second painted on the screen by a moving electron beam. Between the pictures, the screen is blanked out in order that the electron beam can be returned from the bottom of the frame to the top to begin “drawing” the next picture. This is called the vertical sync interval. A switcher, controlled by the synchronizing generator (see below), permits you to cut from camera to camera during this interval, yielding good clean “cuts” in the blank screen period. If the switching is done outside this interval, the picture would tear or break up. Switchers range in price from about \$500 to well over \$10,000, depending on their degree of refinement and the number of input channels they can handle. Some of the higher-priced switchers incorporate special effects such as “wiping” or “splitting” the screen.

To control microphones in situations where more than one is being used, an audio mixer is necessary. Like video switchers, they can be simple four-channel jobs at about \$200 to over \$5000 or more.

Microphones in the \$50 to \$100 price range are adequate for community programming. In this category you can use both lavalier (or neck) mikes, or stand and desk mikes. If the audio mixer permits, a combination of both can be used.

We have thus far discussed the essentials of picture recording: the camera, the video tape recorder, and the picture and audio switchers or mixers. And now let us look at some of the control apparatus we might expect to meet in the average situation.

When two or more cameras are used with switching and mixing, they will be controlled by a sync generator. This piece of gear produces a form of electrical energy in appropriate pulses that “marries” the apparatus in the field, or studio, and guarantees the stability of the final product in the system and in the home receiver. Without a good sync generator, you can expect loss of vertical or horizontal stability resulting in picture “tear” and rolling on the system. Sync generators are made by many manufacturers and are well worth the investment when possible.

To control the quality of pictures and to ensure uniformity when cutting from camera to camera, the pictures should be checked on a waveform monitor. This is an oscilloscope designed for picture monitoring. The monitor tells you at a glance that the ratio of sync pulses to picture information is correct, and permits you

to observe the quality and shape of sync pulses themselves. It also permits the setting of proper video levels, ensuring that a good signal-to-noise ratio is produced. It is an invaluable tool and is usually found in the control room of community television stations. Once again, although an amateur can read it and use it effectively, its intricacies require the services of a trained technician.

A volume unit (VU) indicator is a meter showing the relative loudness of your microphone to other audio inputs as established by the volume controls on the mixer. It ensures uniformity of sound level from source to source. It is easily read and easily understood.

As you become more familiar with programming, you will need other associated equipment which can lead to better picture quality and greater satisfaction with the quality of the work you are attempting to do.

A most important new development is the time base corrector. It is coming into use and becoming more widely available, although at a price which only a few systems can afford at the present time. It is used with the helical scan video tape recorders commonly used in community programming.

Helical scan machines have one drawback to perfect picture stability, the "flag waving" or picture hooking mentioned earlier which is inherent to the electrical/mechanical processes of this type of machine. These faults can be corrected by use of a time base corrector. The author has seen two types at work. One is the Model Delta 44 manufactured by Television Microtime Incorporated, and the other is the Consolidated Video Systems Model 500. Both can produce rock-steady pictures for system display, even though the original material before processing by a TBC had the characteristic instability of the helical scan system. The price is high. Available models run from \$9000 to \$12,000, indicating that one must pay dearly to approximate the picture stability achieved by the commercial broadcasters. Time base correctors must be considered to be a luxury item at the present time.

No matter what kind of apparatus you are using, whether outdoors or in studio, make a few test shots and read the results from your monitors before you begin shooting the programme. Often a few seconds spent on this phase of production will save the disappointment of failing to capture the programme in its entirety or give the producers the opportunity to correct faults in lighting or audio mixing before the programme is recorded.

If you are using a machine with edit capability (and we will discuss this in detail later), check to see that the edits are smooth and clean.

If you are shooting outdoors, use sunlight to your advantage. Try to keep the sun over your shoulder and on the subject. If the sun is behind clouds, avoid shooting large grey areas of sky behind your subject. That kind of light-producing area often dominates your overall lighting and your subjects appear as silhouettes. Broad expanses of sky light often cause severe sync

pulse compression in automatic cameras, resulting in difficult conditions when playing back or dubbing. Be sure to use any daylight optical filters provided with the camera, especially if it is a plumbicon camera.

Vary your shots. Use close-ups frequently and avoid wide shots that diminish your subject on the screen. When you need to pan, or sweep a field of interest, do it slowly and usually with a wide shot instead of a close-up. The resulting pictures have more flow and continuity.

When working indoors, bring a light if you can. Even a 500-watt quartz light directed from near the camera will give your pictures better clarity and definition. Make sure that the light is not shining into a reflecting surface such as a polished wall or glass surface. Don't place a person in a room against a window or other sources of intense backlight unless you are planning a silhouette. Manufacturers of lights for television often publish little booklets advising you how to light indoors. Some of the major makers of optical still cameras also publish inexpensive handbooks on lighting. They are well worth the few pennies they cost.

Try to keep your microphones reasonably close to the subject. You will seldom encounter the sound-conditioned studios of the commercial television companies, so you will have to experiment to get good voice pick-up, excluding as much extraneous sound as possible. If there are machines close by or heavy traffic conditions, mike as close as possible. A nylon stocking wrapped over a mike used outdoors will reduce the wind "pop".

These are important considerations to apply when making a programme outdoors or in studio. Sometimes with a portapak you may have to wait for better sound conditions before you proceed, since they are especially sensitive to ambient noise.

Now let us consider some of the other aids available to you to produce interesting programmes. Good editing capability is certainly one of these. You can not expect to record a half-hour programme of a documentary nature without gathering an abundance of material and editing it. Good editing allows you more control over the finished product and gives variety. Unhappily, it is not easily done with most portable apparatus, and sometimes only very painstakingly with available studio apparatus. Since the portapak is so widely used, we refer here to a technical bulletin published by the National Film Board of Canada. It is called "Modifications to VTR equipment to provide an improved method of editing half-inch video tape recordings." The paper describes a system for editing half-inch video tape recordings to give almost the same results obtainable with costly and professional equipment. The concept was initiated by Robert Forget of the NFB because he too had felt the frustrations of editing and assembling programmes from highly portable machines. Until Forget's work with the NFB technicians, good editing was dependent on good luck and often on good guesswork.

The combined work of Forget and the National Film Board people produced a system whereby two machines could be "ganged" together and operated from a common switch. Thus, edits could be achieved with assurance that both the picture and sound tracks of the "child" and "mother" machines would be synchronized.

The modifications to existing equipment cannot be done without the help of a skilled technician with good equipment and a good bench. If you wish to have the changes made on your behalf, write for a copy of the bulletin to: The Technical and Productions Service Branch of the National Film Board of Canada, PO Box 6100, Montreal 101, Quebec, Canada. If you are an enthusiast, read the pamphlet with the help of your technician and enjoy a better understanding of the process.

Some discussion is in order with respect to the future of community programming. Some systems in North America are wired with dual cable, and others with two-way amplifiers permitting transmission of signals in both directions. This opens up the possibility of originating programmes from almost any point on the system back to a central studio or control hub. Although this kind of programming has been done in North America, and quite successfully, it is not in wide use at the present time but offers exciting possibilities for the future. As more and more systems are wired for this capability, the prospect of inter-community dialogue and multiple origination centres will become a reality. Some systems such as QCTV in Edmonton have built in this concept.

Almost all community channels presently use the telephone for interactive programming. The equipment to permit incoming calls on the air can be very complex but it need not be. The standard speaker-phone with a microphone closely coupled to it can produce very satisfactory results, although care must be exercised to avoid feedback. Some of the most exciting and valuable programming in our country depends on this simplest of interactive devices.

In the midst of development of highly portable video tape machines and cameras, it is important not to forget the role of film. Recently the Eastman Kodak Co. produced the Ektasound film camera models 130 and 140 for super-8 magnetic striped film. The cameras cost about \$500 and appear to be worth considering for low-cost portable operations. They are light in weight, small, and have self-contained power and sound systems. The companion piece to the Ektasound super-8 camera might be the Kodak Videoplayer Model VP-1. This unit will play super-8 cassette directly into the video system with good picture and sound quality. A telecine chain is not required and the price is around \$1500.

However, the complex sound-on-film systems are not the only answer: in the average community there are likely hundreds of 8mm cameras which can be used to

record moving visual images. Since this film can be edited, a great deal of creative control is possible if the local cable television system has a facility for playing

8mm film through its system. It is not difficult to compose simple sound tracks on tape to accompany the images.

When making film programmes, some basic editing equipment is required. For silent film you will need two film rewinds, a viewer, and a film splicer.

For sound film editing, you must add a reproducer or "reader" to enable you to hear the sound as it relates to the picture material in order that cuts and splices can be made at the appropriate spot.

Another means of bringing visual interest to a programme is by use of 35mm slides. The impact of documentary and discussion programmes can be greatly enhanced by adroit use of good pictures. In addition to story-telling value, the 35mm approach is economical, fast, and highly portable. Virtually all cable television studios have a slide projector as an integral unit of their basic studio.

When shooting either film or slides for use on the community channel, remember that the projection and video system only transmits about 70% of the picture area of the original film. Make sure there are no vital pictorial details too close to the borders of your film or slide original. They simply won't reach the home set.

There is a concern which must be expressed when discussing the future of community programming. Most of what is written today will very likely be obsolete tomorrow; such is the rapidity of change in technology. But there are several developments close at hand which may serve as benchmarks in the evolution of this exciting and demanding means of communication. The use of the two-way system in order to provide true interactive personal participation will undoubtedly prove to be a great challenge. The video tape recorders of the future will be smaller, with the added sophistication of internal time base correction and full colour capability. Developments in film will include new and rapid home processing systems—consider for a moment the possibilities of the instant sound and colour film presently being developed.

But right now we have access to capable equipment. It is up to you and your cable system to supply the vision and energy to make it work for you and your community.

Appendix: Cable television

BACKGROUND

When television was introduced in the early 1950s, the receiver, or set, was just as bulky as the first radio sets of the thirties. It had a very small screen, and required some sort of aerial to pick up those waves that filled the

air. The simplest method was to attach two vertical, metal rods, tilt them at various angles and, voilà! the picture materialized. These were rabbit's ears. Soon they gave way to the exterior aerial or antenna which became a symbol of suburban prosperity.

As that prosperity began to manifest itself in other ways and cities grew, that growth began to interfere with television reception. Aerials got taller, but there was a limit. If a high-rise building went in down the street there was very little hope of not getting interference on channels.

Meanwhile, some communities faced a slightly different problem. They were so far from the television stations that they could barely pick anything up. The solution these towns came up with was dubbed a community antenna television system, or CATV. The first Canadian system is generally considered to be a London, Ontario operation which linked up 15 subscribers to a tall aerial in 1952. CATV did just what the name implied. By combining resources it was possible to put up an antenna that was so high that any TV signals that were in the surrounding air could be caught. From this "head end" these signals could be pumped through cables to the homes of those who wanted to pay for the upkeep of the antenna and the cable itself.

Then the cities decided that this solution might work for them too, and companies sprang up, received licences from the appropriate government body—first the Department of Transportation (DOT), now the Canadian Radio-Television Commission (CRTC)—since there had to be orderly growth, on a monopoly basis, to make the whole idea feasible and to ensure everybody in the city had an equal chance to get the service. They set up their huge antennas and hung their cables. For a small monthly fee, interference-free television was again a reality.

Cable television is just that, television by cable. Or FM radio by cable. As an added bonus, you generally have access to distant stations that wouldn't normally be received with a roof-top antenna. But all this is spectator television, and this handbook is all about active television. So let's move on a little further.

HOW IT WORKS

Let's go back to that big community antenna we called the head end. It gathers the various signals by trapping them and feeding them down to a device that unscrambles, then feeds them into individual TV sets, one for each channel received. In this master control area the signals are then converted back into electronic impulses, just like they do it at the television station's transmitter. Then they are fed into the cable, or more correctly along a central trunkline to a number of cables, finally to the wire that goes to your house, called a drop. At the head end, channel 5 can be changed to a new frequency and come out as channel 12, or any other channel the cable company wants to choose. That's why many channels are not the same when you receive them on cable. It's not done to confuse viewers but rather to allow for a better quality signal. Channel

5's signal, if a local television station were broadcasting on this channel, would interfere with any station carried on the same channel by the cable company in certain areas because of the delay in arrival of the cable signal compared to the arrival of the local signal off air. To ensure a clearer signal, that channel would generally be kept clear of any signal on the cable, and you'd receive channel 5 on another channel, like 12.

Cable signals are pumped out along the distribution lines in much the same way water is pumped out through the pipes of a city, ending up in the various houses and apartments of those subscribing to the service. The TV set then goes about its job of demodulation, translating the signal into a picture that you can watch.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

Since you are reading this handbook because you have a desire to use cable television as an active medium, let us see how that fits into the discussion.

It was decided by the body that licenses cable companies in Canada, the CRTC, that cable television could also serve the role of community media. In a number of isolated communities such as Whitehorse in the Yukon, community programming had been going on for years. Since all licences were granted to specific geographic areas it seemed like a natural role. The mass media, newspapers, radio and television stations, have to serve much larger and more diverse populations. Cable could become a "narrowcaster" in this respect, helping neighbours communicate with neighbours, be they a block away or a mile away in the same community.

So along with each cable licence went a request to set aside one channel for this new medium. Community programmes would come from a studio or other form of video centre, feed back to the head end and become part of the cable's flow, coming into your home on an otherwise vacant channel.

The idea of cablecasting has meant in technological terms that the cable itself would no longer be a one-way flow. Most of the early systems were wired, as we said earlier, from the head end to the TV set. Now it is to the cable company's advantage to have the capability of plugging in directly to the system from a variety of points. This may be from a sports arena or the city hall. Systems under development will allow true two-way distribution, through forms of loops as opposed to the current branch method of wiring up subscribers. Plug in a camera to the cable lead in any home on the system and you're on line.

Cable now functions on two levels, as a purely transmission facility and as a community media centre. The cost of distributing the signals carried on the system is related to the rental fee that most cable television systems have to pay the utility or telephone company for use of their poles or underground tunnels. The original installation costs average \$6000 a mile. A head end antenna and related equipment can run up to a quarter-million dollars to install.

Of the 388 licensed cable television systems across Canada in 1973, some 139 were engaged in some form of community programming. Again, the investment in studios and equipment can vary depending on a number of factors: the size of the system, how portable the operator wants his equipment, the state of the art when the equipment was purchased, etc.

The Department of Communications has set minimum standards for the technical construction and operation of Canadian cable television systems. This will ensure that your locally originated signals will reach the viewer with a minimum of degradation in the system.

Production techniques

Steve Moss

Most community television productions must operate under conditions that are far from optimal. This is a hard fact of life for community programmers. Resources will often be in short supply, equipment will be limited, and technical capability in general will be quite severely restricted. What does this imply for the quality of programmes that can be produced? Must community programmes necessarily be dull, bland, and unattractive because of the circumstances under which they are made? In considering this question two points should be borne in mind. The first is that *all* television production, professional or otherwise, operates under conditions of shortage. It may be shortage of time, money, or talent, but one way or another even the most glamorous network show has to contend with production parameters which will restrict what can be done. Community productions are no different in this respect, even though the scale of disadvantage generally is increased. The second point is that pure production values—time, money, people, and equipment—cannot guarantee in any case a high-quality production, and that other factors such as perception of subject matter, insight, and clarity in subject treatment and effective presentation are at least equally important. These factors can be brought into play in community productions as easily as in commercial television.

The purpose of this article then is to suggest ways in which programmes of high technical and creative quality can be produced under restrictive conditions. I will argue that by learning to modify and innovate with available equipment, and to consciously experiment with and incorporate different techniques of programme production, you can upgrade your community productions to an extent that you may not have thought possible. I will deal with the two areas of production, tools and production techniques, separately. In each case suggestions will be made which may help you to extend the range of possibilities available when you sit down to plan a programme. I will not attempt to cover the whole field of tools and techniques in film and television; more comprehensive treatments of these subjects are available from a variety of sources.¹ By passing on a few specific hints and ideas, hopefully this article will encourage you to discover the means of extracting production information from sources that are immediately available to you, and so develop your production facility to its maximum potential.

Tools and facilities

First of all what can be done with equipment and facilities that are really bottom of the line, for example a basic television hardware package comprised of one camera and one video tape recorder? There is no doubt that in this situation the odds are definitely stacked

against you and that in order to make anything visually attractive, you are going to have to work very hard. But the situation is by no means hopeless, and it can be quite definitely improved by breaking a few rules and disguising technical limitations with imaginative technique. Give up the attempt to produce smooth, sculptured images, abandon your fixed camera and, if possible, move in closely on your subject. Don't try to imitate studied professional production technique because with a one-camera set-up you will only end up with long, single-view shots which, although they may in themselves be perfect, will inevitably result in boring overall presentations. Instead look critically at news film and uncut documentary material where the single camera, hand held, hand carried, and hand manipulated technique becomes a kind of art form. Try this searching, probing, close-up kind of approach, but achieve it within the limitations of your equipment. Skill is required to use this loose form effectively, and I will set out some essential rules later in this article.

Experiment with in-camera editing, which means taking different shots of the same subject in sequence, and building up a montage effect. If you have a portapak unit you can stop taping and move to a new position quite easily. The startup on these units is pretty clean—not quite like a perfect edit but not very objectionable either. By modifying the small trigger switch inside the camera you can make these startups even less severe, and the trigger can be operated like that on a movie camera, press for on, release for off. A modified trigger simplifies in-camera editing, and also minimizes the loud clicking noise when the trigger is pulled.

Try shooting some material from a floor position, or from a stepladder, to give shots interesting angles. Remember that variety and movement is the key if you are to minimize the limitations of one-camera production. You may be tempted to add such variety by using your zoom frequently during shots, but be careful of overdoing this since it quickly betrays your low-budget equipment, and draws attention to technique rather than subject matter. Instead use the zoom to move in a little or out a bit, to frame and compose your image, to pick out detail and emphasize close-ups (television feeds on close-ups). If you move your camera slowly, a tension seems to build between shots, winning more attention from your audience. By experimenting in this way with the rhythm and pacing of shots you may add a new dimension to your productions.

So much for the single-camera set-up. Because of its inherent technical limitations it is inevitable that programme producers using such a facility are forced into a great dependency on technique, and this in itself can be a useful training experience. Only when production becomes a problem are major innovative and imaginative leaps made. Nevertheless the restrictions imposed

by the single-camera set-up are many; it is fortunate that most community production facilities extend beyond this bare minimum, and that in many cases two or three cameras and a production studio are available. At this level of operation the possibilities for programme production are considerably increased.

THE STUDIO

Consider, for example, the potential afforded by the studio itself. You will have a controlled space where environments can be created to accommodate any kind of subject matter. Lighting equipment will be available, allowing you to sculpture your subject or in effect to "paint" your scene with light. There will be a choice of camera shots, angles, composition, and subject coverage, a facility for cutting and mixing from image to image and perhaps even a way of generating certain special effects such as wipes and superimpositions. Perhaps more important you will be able to develop a controlled sound track to accompany your images with a facility for mixing sound from many sources so that music, synchronous sound, and special sound effects can be overlaid. Aspects of studio production like these should be considered critically, and not simply taken for granted, or else their potential for transforming your ideas will not be fully realized.

In considering props and backdrops in studio work, for example, it is a mistake to rely exclusively on conventional table and chair formats and neutral background curtain material. Instead try experimenting with ordinary materials such as corrugated packing cardboard, egg cartons, styrofoam packing, or tubes from paper towel rolls, all of which have creative potential for backdrops. The beauty of making background components from such lightweight materials is that they may be changed quickly and easily into different designs. Material may be fastened to large sheets of plywood or masonite or simply to an existing wall with removable double-faced tape. You may be able to dispense entirely with your table and chairs by constructing platforms at different levels on which your subjects can stand, sit, or lean. Using this kind of approach your backdrop will more easily enhance the people or objects in front of it. You may consider giving your backdrop a graphic reference point, such as a map, chart, logo, or show title, and these points can be used to produce a more interesting opening or closing camera shot, or as a device to move more smoothly from one segment of the programme to another.

An inexpensive way to make large letters or outline scenery for use in sets is to draw or stencil them onto small cards of 3:4 aspect ratio, photograph them with a 35 mm camera and obtain slides of your desired art work. These can then be projected onto one-inch sheets of polyurethane foam, moving the projector forward or backward until you obtain the image size required. Trace the image on the polyfoam with a marker pen and then cut the image out with a knife. Once the set is cut out it can be spray-painted as desired, and hung on wires from the ceiling or supported on the studio floor. Using this approach and

others like it scenery can be constructed that is really imaginative and unusual.

Once you have your set organized, you can use lighting technique to maximum effect. Directional lighting and creative use of shadows can inject emotional content into your programmes and maximize the effects you obtain from your props and scenery. If your studio lighting grid is high enough, you can try setting up two or even three separate scenes in your studio, each with its own pool of light and each separated from its neighbour by an area of darkness. Using such an approach you can develop dramatic narrative material utilizing parallel action. This means that simultaneously occurring events can be recorded using the same cameras by simply panning or dollying from scene to scene. This adds great scope to your ability to tell stories and reproduce events in the studio. Remember also that your studio lights need not necessarily all be slung from the ceiling, and that by lighting faces and objects from the side, and especially from below, you can achieve very startling effects.

The same principle of varying height applies to your studio camera, which should be capable of being physically raised and lowered in addition to being tilted up and down. By modifying your studio dolly you may be able to take shots from floor level which will add considerably to your ability to produce interesting visuals. It is largely through ignorance that so many community productions are shot entirely from chest level, simply because the cameraman finds it the most comfortable position for camera operation. It is exactly this kind of thinking that you should question if you want to discover what is really possible with your equipment. Creative use of the studio camera on its dolly is a strenuous business, but it is very necessary if you want to make the most of your subject matter. Much of the difficulty here lies in inadequate dolly construction, and you may be able to remedy this by undertaking selective modifications. A useful tip is to build a platform on the dolly at about six inches from ground level and placing heavy weights such as concrete blocks on the platform for increased stability. If you are handy with tools you may also be able to find a way of fixing your camera on this platform for floor shots. Make sure your dolly has guards around the wheels so that it will push away all cables and wires rather than bumping over them. Above all grease and service your dolly so that it works smoothly and quietly.

Many studios suffer from limitations of space, and this can severely limit your production scope if you are not prepared to think creatively about solving the problem. An old trick, but still a good one, is to use mirrors to extend the distance between subject and camera so that long shots and wide angle photography can be used to their full effect (remember that shooting a subject some distance from a mirror will decrease its size). It may be that you can shoot into the studio area through a door, or even through the control room window, in order, to achieve the desired effect. Careful planning of studio layout and equipment will also help here, and some small studios have all wires, cables, and

even props slung from the ceiling so that they can be raised out of the way whenever desired. Efficient organization and production control is essential in a small studio, and a good cameraman doubling as floor manager can work miracles in this kind of a situation.

Mirrors are useful things to have around studios even if you don't have a space problem. They can be used for overhead shots by carefully angling them from the lighting grid or the ceiling so that the studio camera can shoot up into them and view the subject from above.

In addition to modifying tools and creatively using space, your studio productions can be greatly aided by effective use of graphics and still photographs. These may be used for opening and closing sequences and credits, and also may be incorporated into the body of the programme. When designing graphics some basic principles should be borne in mind. First, all captions or written material must be made to fit into the standard television aspect ratio, and you should be careful not to go too near the edge of your 3:4 card or you will develop a cut-off problem. If you are using slides, remember that a certain percentage of the slides (around the sides) will be cut off. Therefore, center your subject. Second, if you design your graphics using white letters or figures on a black background instead of the more conventional black on white format, you will be able to superimpose them on your studio visuals. This is a very useful facility to have, especially for title and credit sequences.

Graphics can be effectively presented in a variety of ways including the drum method, where a series of graphics can be slowly and evenly rolled in front of the camera, and the more simple card method. By fixing your title cards to the studio wall, you can use one of the studio cameras to cover the graphics portions of your show. A more adventurous approach is to have your material actually incorporated in the set so that the camera can tilt, pan, or pull focus to reveal the graphics dramatically. A third alternative in a small studio is to have a person in the scene hold the title card. He can then physically flip the card away or let it fall to reveal himself and so begin the show.

When using graphics or still photographs as part of a production remember that you need not necessarily show the whole card or photograph at once, and that, by shooting such material with your camera at its full telephoto setting, you can move around, gradually exposing more and more. Also you can use the zoom to move into or out of a particular point on the card or photograph and combine this effect with camera movement. This simulated rostrum camera approach allows you to make statements about the content of your material, for example emphasizing one key figure or person in the context of his surroundings, or underlining a particular physical relationship between two characters.

LOCATION WORK

Discussion of graphics and still photograph inserts for programming takes us a stage further into the realm of low budget production possibilities. Once you have discovered and exploited the potential of the studio itself you should consider what more can be done by adding location material to your shows. However imaginative you are with set decoration and lighting, it is a fact of television production that a studio shot will almost always look like a studio shot, and if you want to inject a feeling of environmental reality you must take your cameras out into the street. Some of the more sophisticated community production set-ups may be geared for this with mobile television cameras, switcher, and VTR, all designed to fit into and be controlled from a truck which can be driven to the remote location. This full location production facility is enviable, although organizing and planning the logistics of a remote production is complicated and time consuming. There is much to be said for alternative simpler and cheaper methods of obtaining location material. Two methods in particular may be considered. The first involves the portapak, or some similar narrow gauge portable VTR and camera unit, and the second consists of the use of super-8 film.

Unfortunately, using the portapak presents problems in many ways, and demands a good deal of experimentation and adaption to be fully effective. Though designed to be fully portable, the unit in fact is quite heavy, and with the VTR slung over a shoulder, steady camera work becomes difficult. One way to deal with this is to set the VTR on the ground, and use an extension cable to get the required mobility. At best, however, this is only a partial solution since you can only go as far as your cable is long, and the cable itself can become cumbersome if you have to continually double back on your tracks. An alternative is to construct a harness which supports the VTR adequately on your body so that the weight is properly distributed. This allows the cameraman to drop his arms occasionally and so relieve tension and cramp during a prolonged shooting session. If the harness or back pack is properly designed it can incorporate a chest pad arrangement on which the camera itself can be supported.² This permits good, steady pictures, even with the lens set at full telephoto position, without hindering mobility. Used in this way the portapak is an invaluable asset, allowing you to record high quality programme material virtually anywhere.³

This go-anywhere feature is perhaps even more true of super-8 film, which has evolved rapidly from a home movie medium into a sophisticated, high quality format. Super-8 cameras represent the ultimate in lightweight, versatile equipment, and their potential use to the community programmer should not be underestimated. With a super-8 camera you can capture fast-moving events or candid material, you can try slow motion or speeded up sequences and even attempt animation techniques. Most super-8 cameras have efficient zoom lenses, often with a greater range than the portapak.

Good super-8 equipment will allow you to make dissolves in the camera, to shoot under poor light conditions, and to experiment with extreme close-up photography, all of which add considerably to your production scope.

Super-8's versatility has been broadened by the recent appearance of high speed film available in the super-8 cassette format, including Kodak's Ektachrome 160 and GAF's ASA 500 black and white stock, and by the introduction of equipment for recording synchronous sound.

The portability of the portapak and super-8 equipment means that you can experiment with camera mobility and obtain exciting visual material by, for example, shooting inside moving cars, trains, or buses or by attempting long tracking or crabbing shots utilizing some kind of improvised dolly arrangement. Wheelchairs are particularly good for this, producing smooth controlled movement in any direction, but if you can't lay your hands on one you could substitute a supermarket shopping carriage or even a baby carriage.

When using your portapak or super-8 camera, you should make an effort to familiarize yourself with the idiosyncrasies of the equipment. The portapak, for example, is extremely light sensitive, and if you point the lens at a very bright object or at the sun, you run the risk of burning the tube. To avoid this, try wherever possible to get the light source behind you, and develop the habit of continually checking the aperture while shooting. Because the aperture is manually controlled on the portapak you must adjust the setting each time you move into a more or less highly lit scene, to ensure there is the right amount of light needed to produce a good sharp image. Most super-8 cameras have automatic exposure control. However this in itself can cause problems, particularly when shooting people or objects against bright backgrounds. In such a situation the camera will adjust itself to correctly expose for light falling on the total scene, and so the comparatively darker subjects in the scene will be underexposed. The best way to avoid this is to use where possible super-8 cameras which have a manual override for the automatic exposure control.

For shooting scenes which demand synchronous sound, such as location interviews, it is in general more practical to use the portapak rather than super-8 equipment. Even if you are able to invest in one of the new synchronous super-8 sound recorders, shooting film with sync sound is a relatively expensive process, which will soon exhaust your production resources. This is unfortunate because the quality of sound that can be obtained in this way is generally much better than that produced by the portapak. Nevertheless if you are prepared to familiarize yourself with the sound system on the portapak and undertake some small modifications, you can upgrade the quality of the sound produced to the point where it is quite acceptable. The basic problem with portapak sound is that it operates with automatic gain control so that, when there is a momentary break in the sound source, unwanted

background sound and VTR noise is boosted and becomes very irritating. A useful modification involves bypassing this AGC device and installing a manual volume control and VU meter enabling you to control sound input. Be careful in attempting this kind of modification. You should have expert technical advice or you may ruin your equipment.

Another point to note about sound with the portapak is that wherever possible you should use the extension microphone and not the built-in microphone. Although this really demands a two-man camera team, it is well worth the trouble since the quality of sound produced will be significantly higher. Above all else, learn to become aware of background noise and how it may affect your recorded sound quality. Wherever possible take steps to reduce any ambient sound by turning off air conditioners, radios, etc., and by seeking out quiet locations. If you can add sound later, consider shooting the scene without sound, by placing a spare miniplug in the mic input of the VTR. This cuts off the camera microphone and makes sound dubbed later much cleaner.

Location work using a portapak or super-8 equipment often demands additional lighting, particularly if you are shooting during late afternoon or at night. If you can't afford to purchase portable lighting units such as sun guns, you should experiment with using sealed beam car headlights and a twelve-volt car battery, which can be very effective as an improvised location lighting kit. Remember also when using your portapak or super-8 camera to continually check the batteries which provide power for tape or film drive. In cold weather batteries run down very quickly, and it is advisable to carry spares if possible. Make a habit of always recharging power packs both right after and right before a shoot, and remember that a battery which is allowed to run right down is often ruined. Another tip for portapak use is to carry some Q-tips and methyl hydrate solution so that you can clean the record heads from time to time. This is particularly important when using older magnetic tape because the oxide coating on the tape can easily flake off and interfere with the image recording process.

LOCATION TO STUDIO

Incorporating location portapak or super-8 material into a studio production can be done in a variety of ways. If your facilities include a telecine chain there is no problem in using film. However these telecine units are expensive, and some of them are not equipped to handle super-8. An alternative is to project your film on a wall in the studio and shoot the image with a television camera. The trick here is to keep the projected image small, thus retaining good definition. Position the television camera above the projector to eliminate parallax errors and set the lens at its extreme telephoto position and as close to the wall as possible. (Most cameras will not focus any closer than five feet.) Then move or zoom the projector backward or forward until the projected image fills the television picture.

Further experimentation here may enable you to shoot various special effects combining film and graphics.

Incorporating portapak material into a studio production is sometimes difficult because portapak sync pulse modulation may be different from that used on studio equipment. Unless you have a processing amplifier or a time base corrector this means that you will not be able to feed your portapak material through your switcher unit directly (see below, "Community programming technology"). Instead you can play back your material from the portapak VTR on a monitor, and record from the monitor using one of your studio cameras. Again the trick here is to find the smallest possible monitor so that the image has good definition. Although you are bound to lose some quality by shooting from a monitor, results can nevertheless be quite acceptable. Make sure, if the monitor is used in the studio, that no light falls directly on the screen or else image quality will deteriorate.

EDITING AND SPECIAL EFFECTS

Creative editing of super-8 film and half-inch video tape further extends your range of production possibilities. If you can afford the time and energy, you can transform location sequences and other programme insert material into tight, effective statements that you can use to punctuate your studio presentations. Editing super-8 film is a simple matter, involving the use of a splicer and a film viewer. Experience in editing short sequences will quickly show you what can and cannot be done, and you will be surprised by the effects that can be achieved. It is preferable to use a tape splicer, rather than a cement splicer, so that the joints in the film are not detected. A tape splicer also allows you more control, since you do not have to lose a frame every time you make a cut as you do with the cement splicer.

Editing portapak material is more of a problem since the VTRs are not designed for smooth electronic cutting. The article "Cable television programming technology" in this book will indicate how you can resolve the problem by modifying your VTRs and building a device permitting frame by frame editing. However if this kind of work is beyond your immediate resources, you can attempt a primitive editing job with the existing equipment. To make an edit in this way cue up your two machines at the desired points and then rewind both by a similar number of turns. Do this manually, and don't bother to judge the amount of tape rewound by the footage counters since these are inaccurate for this type of measurement. This rewinding is necessary to allow the machines to get up to normal speed by the time the cue mark appears. Start both machines at the same time and make the edit when appropriate. By trial and error you will quickly establish exactly how much rewinding is necessary and how to obtain a correct edit.

Many sophisticated production set-ups include the facility to incorporate certain special effects in programming such as split screen, chroma key, and special wipe and dissolve effects. Although a common

tendency is to overuse these techniques, they are nevertheless useful in some situations, and it is interesting to see which of them can be duplicated with less sophisticated equipment. Split screen, for example, may be attempted simply by covering with tape one half of one camera lens and the other half of another and mixing the two images. This works best with the lenses set at full telephoto position. Fading into or out of a scene can be done by manual control of the camera iris, gradually opening up to the correct setting or closing down from it. Similarly a rough dissolve may be created by focussing out of one scene, cutting or panning to another scene, and focussing in again. A simulated chroma key effect can be attempted using back screen projection behind the programme subject, although for this to work well you need an extremely bright projected image and a method of lighting the foreground subject so that no light hits the screen. In general such effects are not worth the great effort that is required to set them up; nonetheless, there is much to be said for trying things out, if only to ascertain exactly what is possible with your equipment.

Techniques

There is much literature available on film and television technique; if you are a beginner, you could start by checking out some of the references given in the readings at the end of this book. It is important to remember, however, that you will only really learn about technique if you try things out yourself. No amount of reading can give you the ability to effectively employ different techniques unless you have a working familiarity with them, and the process of learning about technique can be greatly simplified if you relate it to actual production problems which come up in the course of your programming activities. In what follows I shall deal with production techniques in general terms, for both film and television production. However, the two forms are different in many respects, and you will have to interpret what is said according to the medium you are using. I shall deal first with aspects of camera technique, then with staging technique which involves planning and structuring how action is to be covered. This will be followed by a brief discussion of matters relating to sound and lighting, and finally by an examination of the art of producing programmes or organizing the production process.

CAMERAS AND LENSES

To understand cameras and how they work you have to have some understanding of camera optics, and in particular of lenses. You should know that lenses vary in their power to refract light and so they have quite different properties. Wide angle lenses are thick and fat and bend light considerably more than telephoto lenses. As the name suggests, their angle of light acceptance is wide so that they can produce panoramic or "all around" views. Light rays entering such a lens are refracted sharply and come to a focus soon after exiting from the lens. Because the distance between the lens and the plane of focus (or focal plane)

is therefore short, wide angle lenses are often called short focal length lenses. Conversely telephoto lenses are long focal length lenses and their angle of light acceptance is very narrow, so they are useful for close ups, or for shooting subjects which are far away. In between the short focal length and long focal length lenses are what are called "normal" lenses, which have medium focal lengths. Each kind of lens has specific advantages, such as the telephoto lens' ability to get close up and the wide angle lens' ability to accept a wide angle of view and hence to shoot in cramped, confined areas. For every advantage obtained, there is a corresponding disadvantage. Wide angle lenses, for example, will distort your subject in two ways. Parts of the scene at either side will seem to bend inwards and distance or perspective will be apparently increased beyond recognition. Similarly, telephoto lenses will compress or telescope distances so that for example subjects may seem to be walking toward or away from the camera for some time without moving very much. Good camera technique demands that you become very familiar with these lens effects, so that you can use lenses judiciously, and ensure that their effects will add to and not detract from your message.

Effective use of camera lenses also demands some familiarity with the concepts of depth of field, and related factors such as lens aperture or iris control. Your camera is limited in its power to capture objects at different positions in the scene in clear focus. If the camera is focussed at a specific object distance, other points in the scene will be reproduced clearly only if they are sufficiently close to that object. The precise range of object distances which can be satisfactorily reproduced by a lens is called its depth of field. Such depth of field is affected by three factors, and you should obtain a working understanding of these if you want to be able to use focussing technique creatively. The rule to remember is that depth of field can be increased by either extending the object distance from the camera, using a smaller aperture or lens opening (i.e. a higher f. stop), or using a lens with a shorter focal length (or adjusting your zoom lens more toward the wide angle end of the range). Depth of field can be decreased by applying the reverse rules, and although you may think that such reduced depth of field would not be a likely objective, there are occasions when it can be very useful if, for example, you want to pick out a person from a crowd, or to have the background to a scene generally unrecognizable. This technique is often useful when you need to insert a close-up of a person into a scene which has already been shot, and you cannot easily duplicate the background that was in the original.

In addition to these optical aspects of camera work you should develop an understanding of camera movement, and how good camera control can help you to produce effective visual statements. Two kinds of camera movement may be considered, movement of the direction of view of the camera, and movement of the camera itself. Changing the direction of view of a camera is accomplished either by panning (horizontal movement) or tilting (vertical movement), or combining

both of these. Good smooth panning and tilting is an art in itself, and demands precise control and a good tripod head. Nothing can substitute for experience here, and it may be useful to invent exercises in such movement for yourself until you feel confident with your equipment. Panning in particular is difficult because it must always be done slowly or else you will lose the scene altogether. When using TV cameras never pan quickly from one subject to another, because this will result in "smear" marks on the television tube.

Movement of the camera itself can be very effective, both in film and television. Tracking movement involves the forward and back, in-and-out movement of the camera, usually on a dolly. Crabbing is the movement of the camera from side to side, and crane shooting involves some kind of vertical movement of the camera. With the advent of zoom lenses, live camera tracking in television has become almost a lost art, and this is unfortunate because the effect of tracking is quite different from that of zooming. When you zoom in to a scene, nearer objects will retain the same size in the frame relative to further objects; when you track in, they will increase in relative size, thus adding to the sense of perspective. Tracking can therefore produce a quite different visual and emotional experience. When tracking, a cameraman must be alert to changing focus in the same way as is necessary when shooting a moving object. In television shooting, limited studio space usually means that tracking can only be done over short distances, and often this may be possible without pulling focus. If you use a normal, fixed focus lens with approximately a 24° angle of view, for example, you will have enough depth of field to track into your subject for three or four feet without refocussing, provided you don't end up any closer than ten feet away from the subject. Remember though that for any given lens, the closer the camera moves to a subject, the less the depth of field, and if you start your tracking too close to your subject, you will lose focus after only a foot or so of dollying. To reduce this effect, when tracking with a live camera or undertaking almost any hand held camera movement, use the widest angle lens that you can get away with since this will increase depth of field and reduce the apparent unsteadiness caused by the camera movement. One should not become discouraged when learning camera techniques such as focusing. It will take many hours of actual use to learn the techniques to the point that they are almost automatic.

Since the zoom lens is now so prevalent in television and film production, something should be said about its use and abuse. The zoom lens combines all the advantages and disadvantages of wide angle, telephoto, and normal lenses in one piece of equipment. In its fully zoomed-in position the lens becomes telephoto. Fully zoomed-out it becomes wide angle, and in between it acts like a normal lens. The effect of continually zooming in and out is therefore to completely change the spatial and perspective aspects of the scene, in addition to increasing or reducing the area of scene that is covered. Although there are occasions when this zoom effect can be useful, as noted above the unfortunate tendency is to use it indiscriminately, or as

a by-product of moving from close up to long shot or attempting some other similar change. The effect of this is to detract from the content of the programme, since it draws attention away from your subject matter. When learning how to put a visual statement together, it is therefore good practice to specifically avoid using the zoom in the shot unless you are positively seeking the zoom effect itself. Of course, there are occasions when you must use the zoom, such as in the one-camera situation, or when using a portapak, but even here you should employ it carefully and make sure that you are using it for a definite purpose.

Focussing a zoom lens involves three procedures which should become reflex action for all who use a camera. First you zoom in to full telephoto on your subject. If it is a person you should aim at the eyes, otherwise at the central point of interest on the subject. You then focus the lens at this point, and finally zoom back to your desired focal length for the shot. It is a feature of the zoom lens that once focussed at telephoto, the lens will remain in focus throughout the whole of its range, provided that the object distance does not change. Of course there may be situations when you need to change focus during a zoom to produce a certain effect or to move into a new range of depth of field. To do this you should make several trial runs and then mark the extreme focus positions on the lens, or on the push-rod and twist control, with white tape. This will serve as a visual guide to show just how far you must turn the focus control as you zoom.

The essential point to remember about camera technique is that it must be purposeful. All camera movements and lens effects should be used to highlight, emphasize, or otherwise complement the subject matter, and should never be used for visual effect alone. The best camera technique is the one which passes unnoticed. Camera technique should actually be motivated by the actual events you are covering. Thus if one subject in your scene suddenly wheels around and strikes out at another it makes sense to dramatize this by some kind of tracking or crabbing shot. Similarly in a fight or chase sequence it is good practice to use a hand-held camera to emphasize rapid movement.

STAGING

Staging technique is a broad term, used here to describe the various processes involved in transforming ideas into visual form. It includes structuring action for shooting, composing subjects in the frame, choosing a visual approach or treatment, and generally determining just how the transition will be made from the original abstract or verbal concept into the final communicable visual message. To develop an understanding of staging technique you have to learn to see. You have to find out how others see the things that convey impressions to you. It is perhaps the hardest part of the entire production process. Instead of relating to a multidimensional, infinitely variable world you have to begin thinking in terms of one small immobile vertical and rectangular area—the frame or screen. Everything you communicate has to be displayed within this stage; you

are chained to it, and must create within it the illusion of perfect freedom moving in an unbounded world. How can this be done?

To begin with you must investigate the effects of frame positioning on your subject matter. If you wish to avoid momentary disorientation or confusion in a series of static shots, your objects or characters should each remain, from shot to shot, in his respective screen area. If in shot 1 person A is in left frame and person B is in right frame, shot 2 must maintain this spatial relationship. Any close-up of B must therefore have him situated in the right half of the frame and looking to the left. When a change of position is desired then this change should be carried out by a real movement of the performer, or by a movement of the camera, or by some combination of the two. In all cases the movement should be clearly evident to the audience. Similarly, do not compose different figures in such a way that they will follow one another on the same spot on the frame. These rules will help you maintain the clarity of visual presentation which is essential if you wish your audience to understand your message as it is intended.

Consider also how effective composition can make your scene more visually attractive or dramatic. Good composition demands constant framing. Learn to become conscious of how objects and people in the frame can be offset to ensure a balanced overall feeling. If your main subject is far away you may be able to put in some foreground subjects to create a sense of distance. If you have a group of people in the frame, you can arrange them so that those who are dominating the scene have the right spatial relationship to the others. Try also to avoid weird angles, artificial looking shots, and ultralight shots, all of which create an uncomfortable feeling. On the other hand make sure that you know how to use low angle and high angle shots to achieve an impression of superiority or inferiority.

If you wish to represent people in relation to large-scale physical surroundings consider how this can be done by correct positioning in the frame. A man on top of a cliff, for example, can be positioned in the top half of the frame with the top part of the cliff visible below him. A man at the bottom of a cliff should be positioned in the bottom half of the frame, with the cliffs themselves dominating the upper half. You should experiment also with “cheating” the camera, artificially restructuring the scene for a particular shot so that objects in the scene are actually moved out of their real positions, although this is not detected by the audience. Cheating can often help you to shoot a scene under very difficult physical circumstances, where you cannot freely manoeuvre the camera.

Staging technique also involves determining what medium will be most effective for communicating the message. You should analyze the different “feel” of live and taped shows, of studio and location material, and of edited film and edited video tape. Television has the advantage of effectively combining all audio and visual media, but which of these should be selected to do which jobs? Is an insert best shown on super-8, or by

slides? Is movement essential to understand the point, or would a photograph or drawing fit the mood better?

Consideration should also be given to just how the subject matter is to be treated. Should the treatment be objective, that is, should camera consciousness in the audience be avoided; or subjective, where the camera actually becomes one of the participants in the scene? The standard objective camera approach, used principally for dramatic material, demands that the presence of the camera must appear to go unnoticed by everyone in the scene. Subjective camerawork, however, means that the audience, the camera, and the character which the camera represents, all become one. Rough camerawork need not result in camera consciousness, since movements of the camera will be interpreted as movements of the identified character.

One of the greatest pitfalls in staging and capturing material for visual presentation is what I call the "I was there" syndrome. It is a fact that when you are shooting a scene with which you are very familiar outside the production situation, it is very difficult to appraise it objectively. Because you know the situation well, almost any shot of it communicates to you everything about it. If you are a university student and you have to shoot a university scene, for example, you may be tempted into thinking that any shot showing the buildings and a person carrying some books will communicate everything you feel about the place. In other words, because the shot works on you, you presume that it will work on anybody. This is a fallacy. People in an audience will rarely have the same response to images as the programmer does, because they simply have not had the same experiences and do not come from the same background. This sounds simple, but when you try to apply the principle to shooting familiar scenes you will see that it is very important. In order for your audience to get the intended message, you may have to spell it out in much greater detail than you anticipated.

The "I was there" syndrome also crops up in other situations, even those which you can appraise objectively. It may occur, for example, when you are trying to capture movement in the scene. Consider the case of a horse race which you are shooting at a 90° angle by panning with the lead horse. When you look at the scene itself it is obvious that there is a great sense of movement and speed. However when you look at what you have shot the sense of movement seems strangely lost. Why? The answer of course is that by panning with the horses their position in the frame remains relatively unchanged. The background is blurred all right, and the horses are going through the motions of galloping, but the sense of speed itself is lost. We have in fact been betrayed by the moving camera's power to subtract apparent object movement. This was not noticed at the time of shooting simply because "we were there." This particular problem of reproducing movement in the frame can be solved in a variety of ways. In the horse race situation, for example, it is good practice to shoot the scene at a sharp angle so that the horses actually cross the frame as they come closer and closer, eventually either running off the frame or "forcing" a

sharp pan around as they pass us by. In other situations it may be necessary to artificially exaggerate movement or background perspective changes in order to reproduce the desired effect.

There are many other aspects of staging technique which will come up in the course of your production activities. The important thing is not to make a fetish of studying techniques, but rather to remain critical of your own programming so that you can objectively appraise which parts of your programmes work and which parts don't. By doing this you will gradually come to an understanding of staging technique through your own experiences. Other production techniques, in particular those relating to the use of sound and lighting, can be approached in a more precise way because there are key principles at work which can be directly identified. This does not mean that such techniques cannot be employed creatively, and in fact the opposite is true, but there are a few rules—a very few—and some tried and true ways of doing things that most lighting directors and sound engineers would endorse. These should be mastered, so that you can then proceed to experiment, and innovate on a firm foundation.

LIGHTING

Lighting for television and film is really amazingly simple. What you are trying to do is essentially duplicate, and in some cases emphasize, the way in which natural illumination, sunlight, works. As sunlight reaches the earth, part of it is diffused. This creates the "surround" light that illuminates shadows caused by the main directional light source. The relationship between the main or key light and "surround" or fill light is a principal variable in artificial lighting technique. Different lighting units produce key and fill light of varying quality and intensity, and the right way to proceed in this area is to experiment with your equipment until you are thoroughly familiar with its properties. The position and angle of the key light is highly important in portraying form and in flattering appearance. In order to create shadow and character, a general but not rigid rule is to place the key light to one side of a 45° angle to the subject. A subject that has head-on lighting has all the natural lines washed out, and appears flat and uninteresting. This holds true whether the subject is a person or an object. Once the key light is in position, the subject will be revealed, but there will be excessive shadow on one side. This shadow should be reduced with fill light, which generally is softer in quality than key light, so that it does not itself throw a harsh shadow and so create double shadow effects.

The key and fill are all that are needed to reveal the subject thoroughly. However, to create a sense of depth in the picture and separate objects from their surroundings, a second variable is introduced: backlighting. Usually a spotlight is used for this purpose, so that the backlight can be localized on the subject and be of high intensity, forming a halo effect around the subject. This simple lighting technique of key, fill, and back is known

as three-point lighting, and represents a basic approach to almost any lighting problem. Armed with this technique you should be able to adapt to any studio or location situation. You should realize, however, that it is only a basis or foundation for creative lighting and that additional techniques will be necessary for special effects, dramatic emphasis, or unusual situations.

Two useful additional techniques to remember are cameo lighting and silhouette lighting. Cameo or limbo lighting involves lighting the subject in such a way that light does not spill onto the background. The same approach is used as for three-point lighting except that barn doors (hinged "doors" attached to the lights) are used to mask off all light falling on the set. To do this the light has to come from above, at least a 45° vertical angle, so that the throw of the beam is on the floor. The advantage of this type of lighting is that it creates a neutral setting which does not require a real set or backdrop material. It produces more dramatic lighting and gives a sense of urgency and importance to the subject. Silhouette lighting can be used for highly dramatic and ornamental shadow effects. Here the background is lighted but not the subject so that it appears in silhouette form. To do this the background material should be light in colour and the subject should be out at least two or three feet from the background so that reflected light does not illuminate him.

Make sure also when lighting that you give consideration to the effect of set and costume or clothing colours on image quality. A subject wearing clothes of the same colour as the background, for example, will fade into that background, no matter how effective your lighting. You must therefore pay attention to contrast and image quality generally if your lighting expertise is to pay off. Finally, to make the most of lighting technique, make a point of going to see certain classic movies in which lighting has been used in unusual and exciting ways. The German Expressionist films, for example, are particularly interesting for lighting technique, as are the films of Hitchcock, Orson Welles, and Reed.

SOUND

The technique of television and film sound, as with lighting, is relatively simple in its basics. The overriding objective is clarity: a sound track which effectively communicates the main ideas being put across, or which sets up a mood so that these ideas can be put across visually. The first task is to familiarize yourself thoroughly with your equipment by taking time to study carefully the instruction books that are supplied. Next you must undertake to explore how sound works with images to complement, explain, and emphasize them.

In a finished programme, the sound perspective matches the picture perspective. Usually if a close up appears on the screen, it is accompanied by close up sound, and distant scenes can likewise be synchronized with a quality of sound which seems to match the distance of the picture. Normal dialogue, for example, may be safely modulated to zero VU (on a standard VU

meter) whereas intimate scenes involving whispering should be recorded at a level much lower than zero VU. However when recording such scenes you must be sure that the level is nevertheless high enough so that extraneous noises will not make the dialogue unintelligible. A first-class sense of sound recording thus demands a knowledge of the intended visuals and a sympathetic understanding of the intended programme message.

Location sound may be either recorded synchronously with the picture, or recorded "wild" and added to the production separately. In either case it is advisable wherever possible to use a sound mixer when recording so that you can more effectively control quality. Mixing technique is an art that is only learned with experience. There are some tips which are useful to remember. When using the mixer, for example, avoid turning the controls constantly since this produces volume changes and results in a poor recording. Instead find a good volume level and stay with it. Acoustics vary from one place to another and these variations affect the level and quality of the sound. At any given recording level, sound in a "live" or reverberant set will reproduce at a higher level than sound in a "dull" or non-reverberant set. If sound in a live set is recorded at too high a level, it may be unintelligible when reproduced. Try wherever possible to record some "wild" background sound in each of the locations visited. Often this can be usefully played back later over synchronous material to balance a sequence or to give different shots in a scene a sense of continuity.

PRODUCTION

The last aspect of technique to be considered is that relating to the organization of the production process itself. Television production almost always raises large logistic and organization problems, and the importance of planning cannot be overstated. However simple your programme idea, you should always work out in detail all its implications before you begin.

A script is a sine qua non, a basic blueprint for visualizing and controlling all the human and technical processes that are involved. Not only will it help you to get your ideas straight, it will assist others who will be working with you and on whose cooperation you will depend. Don't forget, a script is not just the spoken dialogue. In fact in an interview or other spontaneous show there is obviously no pre-planned dialogue. The script of an audio-visual presentation describes what will be seen and heard and the resources needed to present this basic material in sequence. Pre-production planning should be done carefully and an effort should be made to anticipate all problems that may come up. This will avoid frenetic last-minute changes and compromises and will free you to give your full concentration to the subject matter during production. You should determine accurately the programme requirements in terms of time, money, and people and make sure that your own production parameters will permit

the kind of programme you have in mind. This assessment should be done objectively. There is no point in taking on something which is beyond your capabilities.

Once you are satisfied that the programme is possible, you should spend as much time as possible planning the way in which the various sequences are to be shot. This information should be integrated into the script. For studio productions it is advisable to pre-design your individual shots, giving consideration to each of the proposed shots, noting the possible constraints that might affect you and, most important, other alternatives which would either allow you to overcome such constraints or replace your original coverage with a minimum of compromise.

The importance of this design approach is the security it offers in the heat of production, while the minutes fly by and the pressure builds up. In the same way your lighting should be worked out beforehand, as should all actor or programme subject movements and any changes in props, backdrops, or set appearance.

Once underway a floor manager or production assistant is an indispensable asset to a complicated programme, and you should choose someone you have a good rapport with for this important function. Make sure his or her understanding of the programme is the same as yours before you begin so that he or she can take the initiative in the studio when necessary. When the programme involves guests, or other people who are unfamiliar with television production, make sure your treatment of them is considerate and unhurried so that they feel as comfortable as possible and do not "freeze" once production is underway. Above all try to develop a calm approach to programme control so that you do not affect others by excitement or nervousness. In making your decisions you may be constantly battling frustration and perhaps anxiety; it is important to keep this to yourself and try to show as calm an outward appearance as possible.

Conclusion

In the preceding pages I have attempted to outline some of the ways in which an understanding of tools and techniques can help you produce more effective programming. Three major points stand out. The first is

that you should not allow yourself to feel restricted by the tools and facilities which are at hand. Something can be produced even with equipment that is really bottom of the line, and the more imaginative and thoughtful you are the more you can make of such resources. Don't allow yourself to become too hardware-conscious. Your equipment is only as valuable as your ability to use it effectively, and you should beware of letting it dictate the creative possibilities open to you.

Secondly, concerning the use of production tools, I have suggested that it is a mistake to employ technique for technique's sake. Throughout the production process the important thing to focus on is the subject matter of the programme, and all camera and other production techniques should be subordinated to this fact and used only for the purpose of communicating such subject matter more effectively. Technique should therefore flow from and add to or emphasize substantive programme content. If it doesn't, the chances are that it is being used incorrectly.

Finally, and perhaps most important, when learning to work with tools and techniques, you should look at all rules and conventions regarding their use very critically. Many of these rules and conventions have developed under circumstances quite different from those affecting community production, and you should be cautious of accepting such rules unconditionally. Learn to question the why and wherefore of rules so that you can use them selectively and for your own specific purposes. Many rules, particularly those discussed above under staging technique, are useful and effective principles which will help visual clarity, and general exposition, considerably. Other rules are really just riders from the past which should be avoided because they are no longer relevant and will add nothing to your programming. In deciding which rules are applicable you should attempt to steer a middle course between extremes. Don't on the one hand be afraid to question deeply the origin and purpose of all rules you come across. Don't on the other hand simply ignore rules or assume that they do not apply to your situation. Remember it's not wise to violate rules until you know how to follow them.

Footnotes

1. There are a number of manuals available, some of which may be very useful. They are listed in further readings and resources.
2. There is a good article which clearly explains this in *Educational and Industrial Television*, January 1973.
3. A practical instructor manual for portapak use is currently in preparation by Michael Goldberg, Vancouver (see further readings and resources).

Community programme formats

C. Richards

The media are tools to be used in infinite numbers of ways: you can experiment, you can teach specific skills, you can communicate information. To do this you make something, a programme, but more importantly, you're involved in making something happen for your audience. You start out hoping your programme will accomplish certain things: involving the citizens in your community, or passing on local historical information, or telling a story. Hopefully your purpose will become the experiences of the viewer.

There are several resources to draw on to help your programme grow in the direction you want. The first and most important one is an ability to learn from your audience's reactions. Making a programme is something like putting on a performance. You get constant feedback which tells you many things about how you are doing.

Learning what the audience understood from your programme can bring a few surprises. Occasionally something you tried will have an effect you did not expect; an audience often sees things in a programme that you missed. These kinds of reactions are clues to help you develop a form of programming that will work well in your circumstances.

Often, in spite of all your efforts, your programme is just not doing what you wanted it to do, and one often overlooked cause is using the wrong format. As well as looking to your audience for help, look at the structural solutions that other programmes with similar aims have found (see the following section on formats).

Formats are only inspirations for developing something that suits your individual situation. If you exactly imitate another programme's format, it imposes itself on what you're doing. The format becomes more important than what you want to say.

At one time, some people thought that making tools accessible to people who had never had the opportunity to use them would automatically produce innovative programming. The access to tools is a beginning, but the influence of powerful models such as conventional mass television is so strong that most programming, including community cable programming, has imitated them. When we pick up a tool such as a camera we usually make things that look like programmes we've seen before. It takes a while to understand what parts of existing formats will be useful for us in our circumstances and what parts have no relation to what we want to do.

But even traditional or conventional radio and television formats are changing. The following developments are influencing these changes. The role of the intermediary, or the editor of other's opinions, is decreasing. Either the intermediary's role is less detached and more

continuously involved with the groups making the programme, or the individuals speak directly for themselves. Generally, there is more respect for the individual's capacity to know what s(he) wants to say.

Affected by new, more flexible equipment, shooting styles have become more casual and open, with long continuous shots instead of complex editing construction. There is less staged interaction between people. Certain variables such as combinations of media are set up and used for more open interaction. Replacing the seasonal, routine series of programme types are programmes developed from the evolving initiatives of groups or individuals.

Exploring

No matter what equipment you use (sound recorders, slides or stills, super-8, or video), you discover what kind of things it does best by experimenting with it. Though many things can be explained using words, some things can best be said and understood using sounds or pictures. Realizing what is possible, with the kind of equipment you have, can make communication with your audience even more direct than speech.

PICTURES: DIFFERENT WAYS OF SEEING

A camera has a point of view. And there can be different points of view of the same event. You can illustrate for yourselves the individual differences between two people's view of the same event: if you are part of a small group of people, you will need two video cameras and video tape recorders. Start both cameras and simultaneously record the same audio and visual cue, such as a pair of hands clapping. This will enable you later to line up (or synchronize) the two tapes for replay. Give the cameras to two people in the group to tape the rest of the people in the discussion. These people should think of their cameras as their own eyes following the discussion as they normally would. Line up the finished tapes by the original signal, turn off the sound on one monitor, and play back simultaneously for comparison.

People do use their eyes differently. At the same time there are accepted ways of using a camera. We consider these ways natural but most of them are inventions and were created by early film-makers. D.W. Griffith invented the close-up in 1919. Earlier, a quick cut from a long-shot to a close-up was seen as literally cutting a person in half. Griffith realized that it could emphasize emotion. Now we automatically accept close-ups, and the rest of visual language we take for granted.

We should remember that the camera historically has acted as our eye; the way we've used it reflects our culture. Just as there are differences in how individuals see, there are differences in how cultures see. We often make documents of other cultures. In fact, one of the first documentaries was called "Nanook of the North," about an Inuk. Early documentaries tended to take on a dramatic structure; "Nanook" is the story of the life of the Inuit, one man against nature, but basically it is one culture as seen through the eyes of another. People are still involved in the documentation of other cultures, but now we may want to include in that documentation how the other culture sees what it itself is doing. In other words, if the camera is an eye, there will be things our eyes will not be trained to see.

The Navajo were given film cameras and made films. They saw different images; for instance, a snake in the grass they recorded we might see as simply blurred shots of grass. They refused to take closeup shots of people's faces since this represented an embarrassment in their social code. They structured their films in ways they considered logical and correct, but which would look unnatural to us. With this approach the form as well as the content of the Navajo films gives a picture of a different culture.

Let's return to the way we view things. In most productions, cameras don't draw attention to themselves. They try to make you forget that they're there. But you can make many statements by making an obvious change in the point of view. If you are making a programme about five-year-olds, why not make it literally from their eye level? Follow a cat around the living room and under a chair or sofa at his eye level. What would a walk look like if your eye were in your foot? Or, simply try letting the camera move with you, rhythmically, while you skip or walk with a limp. Put the camera on a motorbike. You won't end up with great production shots but you will "see" the world a bit differently.

PLAYBACK AND PEOPLE

Video has the capacity to instantly replay a tape (like audio), and to display on a television set exactly what you are shooting. If a group of you are experimenting, leave monitors around you showing what you are shooting. Then try it without monitors. Try shooting a conversation, replaying it to the participants, and shooting the response to it.

Any recording device gives a distinct advantage to the person who is using it. Many people experimenting with new, intimate video tools find it important for each person in the group to both use the equipment and to realize the implications of having his or her actions replayed for all to see. (If there is any question of keeping or using the tape for some other purpose than just immediate playback, the individuals involved should agree.)

Immediate replay is very useful for interviews. The person interviewed may feel that what (s)he has said is too strong or not strong enough, and (s)he may want to add something. When you're involved in helping a

person say what (s)he wants to on video tape, the most unassuming camerawork usually draws the least attention to itself and concentrates the viewer's attention on the person's statement.

SOME VISUAL GAMES

If you have a studio to use, there are many effects to explore. The following examples show how to handle and familiarize yourself with the equipment.

Video feedback can be created electronically. Point the camera at the monitor that shows what you are shooting. You will then have a complete circuit and create a repeated image within image within image. By turning the camera, using the zoom, placing objects between the camera and monitor, and using mirrors, all sorts of effects are created. Be careful not to leave the camera pointed into the very intense light you may create by doing this. It is equivalent to pointing the camera at the sun, and you will burn the picture tube.

If you have access to more than the basic equipment, you can explore various combinations. A video tape called "Strip up"² was made in a room with white floors and white walls; this made the video image of the room look flat. A monitor and camera both faced into the room. Two strips of tape formed a cross on the glass of the monitor. Two groups of people near the back walked into the room from either side and by watching the monitor, placed themselves in the two upper rectangles formed by the cross on the monitor. Then two more groups from either side crawled into the two lower rectangles. The groups adjusted their bodies until all the rectangles were covered. The camera only recorded the four groups of people, not the monitor with the tape. In the finished tape the camera saw a cross being made from empty white space by people who looked as if they were arranging themselves on a flat piece of paper.

Another tape which is more of a game was made by the same person.³ Here, a man followed the camera movement; he holds a piece of plexiglass with a cross on it in front of a camera. There is a monitor near the camera which shows both himself and the cross. There is also a cross on the glass of the monitor. He must try and line up his cross with the one on the monitor. But whenever the camera pans or tilts he looks to himself as though he has moved and he must try and match the cross again. The final video tape is taped from the monitor that he is watching so that we can see both the cross he is trying to match and the one in his hands.

The following system experiments with different ways of communication between people.⁴ Place two monitors, each with a camera on top, some distance apart. The audio connection should allow the one person facing a camera/monitor to talk to the other. The images from both cameras are fed into a special effects generator. This allows you to see, on your monitor, various combinations of your own image and the other person's. It's possible to superimpose, to make one face of one person's eyes and nose and the other's mouth, etc. The two people can demand from the switcher how they

want the screen divided. In effect, their images are playing together within that rectangular space.

As you can see, these games are ways of familiarizing yourself with the equipment. They don't directly apply to making programmes. But they do often give you visual ideas; for instance, the last example could be used for a dance or dramatic presentation.

The following talks about how the raw material of media is handled or structured, and how some of these structures can be adapted to your needs.

Event formats

The big event is, of course, the spectacle of the world passing by. We're the spectators.

Conventional television is a medium oddly suited to showing a parade of events. Perhaps it's because television gives the sensation of always being on, even when it's off. It feels continuously plugged into a flow of images. And broadcast television loves to supply them: weddings, riots, government hearings, conferences, parades, funerals, sports. All these big events are already organized and often come with a ready-made live audience. The media people just have to get the cameras out there and follow the action.

Pick up a video camera and just turn it on the world—an electronic vacuum cleaner to supply the continuous flow of images. For this kind of television the camera acts as a transmitter of images. It shows what's happening, now. The big networks can afford to place numerous cameras at what they think will be interesting views of the event. The "director" will see all the images coming into the studio and decide to "switch" between images. At one moment he will send us, say, an overhead long-shot of the Santa Claus parade (taken from the highest building), then a closeup of the floats as seen from a camera on the corner and, for variety, a camera placed at the end of the parade route shows us the fidgeting mayor and crowd. Usually there is a commentator who talks a lot about what the images are and tries to be interesting even when the event looks boring.

These events will happen in the world with or without the media. What television (or radio) wants to do is to transmit them "as they happen." But, there are many different kinds of spectacles, many different viewpoints within events, and many different ways of transmitting an event. What events you want to see or hear and how you want to see and hear them may differ considerably from the above approach to "covering" the parade. The following pages show different ways people have explored these kinds of events. They can be very different from conventional television.

COVERAGE

A great deal of coverage of events is taking place on the cable television community channels. It is part of a simple, direct way of surveying our environment. Most

events are covered in ways that follow standard broadcasting patterns, though without the profusion of cameras, slow-motion equipment, etc. Some studios have mobile facilities that feed the live event directly into the community channel. Others, if they have weekly programmes from the city hall, will leave a permanent line between city hall and the cable television system. Many use portapaks.

Community events such as concerts or dances can be covered in much the same way as other events. Again, without the great technical facilities of conventional broadcasting, people are developing their own visual styles of coverage. The cable system in Beloeil, Quebec, televised a musical group.⁵ Since the cable studio was small, with relatively little light, full shots of the group were difficult. But the programme found a method to communicate the interplay and activity within the group. The camera people shot closeups and moved their camera from, say, hands to the instrument even when the image was superimposed. This created a very dynamic change in the final texture of the image, one image moving on top of another. Most conventional television shows do not like to switch to an already moving camera. When they superimpose, one image usually dominates the other. The Beloeil solution presented a strong, dynamic programme with limited facilities.

In most areas there is not enough available equipment to cover an event from multiple points of view. Then the coverage becomes very real time. The viewer is fixed in the same place as the one camera. If the curtain closes for ten minutes, as at the "Amherst Elementary Music Display"⁶, you at home must wait as everyone in the auditorium must. No shortcuts. In "York Manor Presents Senior Citizen's Variety,"⁷ one camera at the back of the audience panned slowly across the stage of a senior citizen's performance, carefully zooming in and out. The effect was moving, yet static at the same time. The camera didn't force a pattern on the performance but picked up both the rhythm on stage and its own rhythm.

Some of the images we see show us more of the audience. Relationships with the audience, with what the images are, with the camera movements, are changing. In more intimate situations the live audience at an event is as interesting as the event. The audience knows this and relates to itself as the event progresses. In Campbell River, BC, the cable operator covered in a conventional way the visit by the former Governor General and his wife.⁸ When he replayed the tape later the audience which had personally met Mrs. Mitchener called and asked to have that part replayed again. It would be possible to put a camera in the parade, watching the changes in the audience as the parade passes them.

These forms of television have that "voyeur", close-up image quality about them.

WANDERING CAMERA: AN EYE/EAR ON THE LOOSE

The wandering camera has more curiosity behind it than the camera used for coverage. In the conventional intermediary format the experiences are divided into little pieces and edited back together for effect; different views are juxtaposed, our attention is directed toward the host or reporter. We forget about the camera. In the wandering camera form we are very aware of the camera and that it takes us along. This may be partly the result of having only one camera and taking very long examining shots.

In "Reportage sur les incendies de St-Hilaire,"⁹ we no longer are taken along with the usual intrusive camera following a fire. This camera wanders around the neighbourhood taking its time. The portability of the tools, the availability of time (not limited to one and a half minutes for the six o'clock news) creates the situation in which the reporter (and the programme too) meets a pilot and can take the opportunity of going aloft to see the fire and the local landmarks.

The camera can be taken almost anywhere under the arm. In the video tape "Hitchhiking"¹⁰ Frank Vitale did just that. We see a great deal of cars, drivers, and people he meets at an angle from his waist. While hopping a freight, he leaves the camera on as he hands it over the side of the freight car to an experienced train jumper. There are close-ups of hands, other parts of the body, the freight-car and its coupling, all at erratic angles. It is very dramatic but very different from conventional dramatic shooting which would stand back and shoot parts of the body. In "Hitchhiking" we're aware of the camera itself travelling around, having weight. Conventional uses of camera give the impression of a weightless, magic, all-seeing eye.

STATIC CAMERA

This occurs when a camera or microphone is placed somewhere to catch everyday events. Anyone can tune in and gawk: direct unedited stuff, no beginning, ending, not even a zoom now and again.

Television cameras have been set up at a popular strolling spot in a park by a Vancouver cable television system, at a street corner in Mississauga, Ontario, and downtown in Yellowknife, NWT.

A VARIATION: MEDIA COMBINATIONS

It's possible to elaborate on the situation of "the eye on the front porch surveying the scene." By combining different media you can set up different kinds of relationships between people. But these situations are not private, they're not a one-to-one communication system like the telephone. Here, everybody can tune in to see what's going on.

"Off the Street"¹¹ was four hours a day of live programming. It originated from a camera that sat all alone inside a store window on Yonge Street in downtown Toronto. It focused on a podium in the street with a microphone. On the podium was a telephone number

which connected a caller at home to the person in front of the camera, and a sign that informed people they were now on TV. There were monitors in the store window facing the podium.

If you were an extrovert, you could show up on Yonge Street to do your stuff. If you were shy but curious you could use the phone for a bodyless conversation. One person involved made further observations:

We'd been worried about things like what happens if somebody hogs the mike or starts swearing, that sort of thing. It just didn't happen. People seemed to have this ability to regulate themselves. Sometimes when the guy on the phone would get tired of the person on the street, he'd say something like, "Let me talk to that guy behind you—the one with his hands in his pockets." And, sure enough, the other guy would look around, get him and lead him up to the podium.

It was raining. You could see people rushing by in raincoats. About eight buses had gone by. And this little girl (on the phone over the loudspeaker) had been trying to get people to stop, "hey, you lady." Then three motorcycle types, with leather jackets, pulled up to the curb. We thought, "Oh, my God. What are they going to do?" Then, just as they walked up to the podium this little girl said, "Hi! My name's Jane. What's yours?" Stopped them right in their tracks. "Hi. Well, um, mine's Ralph. Yeh, and mine's Randel, mine's Robert." Then she came right out with it. "What's love?" And they got all embarrassed, shuffle, shuffle, mumbled stuff about mother. They couldn't act smart aleck with her.

There are other ways and events to listen to. Remember the party-line? Everyone knew what the human events in a community were because everyone else could listen in. On the Labrador Coast,¹² Bell wanted to substitute telephones for the high frequency radios where all communication between people could be heard by anyone else having a radio. The people felt that though they wanted one-to-one telephone service, it would not fulfill their needs for knowing domestic events and news. With the lack of radio stations, the people were cut off from such public information as the movement of coastal traffic, aircraft traffic, availability of fish and wildlife, news of sickness or death. This information provided general inter-community contact.

The Cominterphone project at Rankin Inlet, NWT wanted to set up public conversations. As with the above television example, a combination of types of media was tried. The telephone exchange was connected to the CBC low power relay transmitter and up to four people could call and discuss a topic with one another while being broadcast over the air. Originally the service was open day and night; now the community wishes to limit it to a specific time period. After an early evening news broadcast they would use it for open discussion over a half-hour or hour period. The audience would then have a specific time to tune in.

WANDERING STATIONS

Stations can wander in two ways. The station can simply come on or go off the air at any time, or the station can originate its programming from different locations. Sometimes, it's possible to combine both. The possibility of programming only when necessary is very attractive to remote communities. Usually, few radio signals are received and the audience can leave the local frequency tuned in just in case announcements are made. Programming continuously would be too heavy a commitment, yet when the need arises for radio service, it is fundamental.

Doug Ward of the CBC talks about an experiment:

We are thinking of a second experiment in an LPRT community. There would be no studio, no high-profile hardware, no expectations about a local radio station. Rather, in response to a community request for local information input into its CBC transmitter, we would provide an animator who will help the community to organize around this need and define and develop the kinds of information input it wishes to communicate. Many of these communities need something as simple as an emergency system of mass communication in times of snow-storm or spring flooding. The local input would all be talk, for fifteen-minute periods at important times in the local daily life.¹³

The usual method of liberating programming from the studio is to record with audio or video tape in different locations and return to broadcast through the transmitter. But there has been an interest in the ability to programme directly from different locations. Small portable FM transmitters have been considered as answers.

Cable television studios, too, can be decentralized. The Toronto Community Radio group considered an urban solution: a store front radio facility connected to the local cable system so that people could easily wander in and talk. Unfortunately, this project could not find funding. The cable television system in St. Jerome, Quebec, wants to originate video material from any home wired into the two-way system. This will make a great amount of live location programming possible. Since most homes also have telephones, the number will be displayed and it will be possible for the viewers to get in touch with the programming location.

News

Watching the organization of bluck..blink...bluckbluck... The National... assures me just before bedtime that the world has been put in some kind of rational order. On the other hand, the American news format, with its action-adventure treatment of the news, can be disturbing. There's always a crisis around the corner in a drama.

There are usually two groups of activities evident when we think of the news. The obvious groups are the announcers, anchormen, and roving reporters who

appear on camera and present the news. In the background are the writers, cameramen, and international news services. The conventional news service is a large, expensive operation.

It is difficult to carry out this approach to news at the local, community-supported level. But it is possible to stick to a similar format. The cable television news programme in Fergus-Elora used two high school reporters and two alternate hosts who read the local news. They showed location tape made of the 100-foot skid marks on the main street, and they named everyone shown in the special event at the Senior Citizens' home. It is a regular news format but content is local with many social items: changes in church service arrangements for the summer, the mayor asks for co-operation for the new inspector, the daughter of... has graduated from nursing school.

If having someone to announce, write, and collect news is difficult, news can be reported directly. Instead of a general comment written and read about inflation, interview someone who follows the grocery prices. It would show the effect of a general news statement. Perhaps different local organizations could take over the news each week.

Big networks like to cover "where the action is"—good old-fashioned news coverage. The intimate local coverage of the above examples must be left out. But sometimes even the large news machines aren't in the right place at the right time. The union for Artistic Woodworking in Toronto asked Challenge for Change to video tape the picket line. When CBC missed a particularly violent incident, it was forced to ask Challenge for Change for the half-inch video tape. But the Challenge for Change documentation went beyond conventional news use. It was shown to a meeting of city aldermen and eventually to a special meeting of the Toronto city council executive held to discuss the incident.

There have been changes in the approach to providing news. Compared to the large networks, most community channels or stations have little money to hire reporters, writers, or to subscribe to an international news service. There is a dependence on volunteer staff, an audience that is local and not large, and occasionally an intimate relationship between the station and the community. This encourages different ways of fulfilling news functions.

In their FM application (January 1974), Vancouver Co-operative Radio talks about including the audience in the process of news gathering and investigative reporting.

The Assignment Desk: How and why a particular story will be worked on is a major decision in any journalistic undertaking.... Once a week...the entire news team will discuss the major assignments on the air. They will summarize the news, and their work to date on on-going stories, then justify why a story might be important enough to demand further work. Listeners will be invited to phone in; to suggest assignments, assist in better ways of

defining assignments, volunteer information or help, follow up a story.

As well as discussion formats for news, there are other ways to fulfil a news function.

THE USE OF EVENT COVERAGE

When there is no reporting system, but a flexible programme schedule and perhaps a great deal of available time, as on some cable television stations, entire events of public importance can easily be transmitted. When a public hearing was held in Vancouver concerning a new channel crossing, "Vancouver City Council Telethon" was transmitted live for the full seven hours. Since it ended early in the morning it was rebroadcast, in parts, at suppertime during the next week. It was possible to watch how City Council treated individual briefs rather than having it reported.

Many places broadcast the local council meetings or school board meetings. At the Conseil municipal de la ville de St-Bruno¹⁵ a member of the council said that the council could not raise the taxes since he had earlier promised, on television, that he would not; he felt his public watching.

THE USE OF SERVICE INFORMATION

If cameras or microphones cannot go to people to cover events, the people can come to the station. In Pond Inlet, NWT at the meetings of the Settlement Council, the Housing Association, or of any other group, "someone is always ready to go up to the radio station to explain to the settlement what happened at the meeting. Paniloo Sungoyak, Chairman of the Settlement Council, was particularly pleased with the station because it meant that all the people could hear about important Council decisions speedily, and at the same time."¹⁶

The telephone, both to phone in information and to phone out asking for details of information, has worked well. This is distinct from the idea of "hard news" and is effective when it remains very different. One thing to consider in small communities is that people might not feel comfortable calling the station with items of interest if the tone of the announcer's voice is very different than the natural conversational tone of the community.

Informing and explaining

SERVICE INFORMATION

Local activities and events are part of the environment that surround us. We need to know about them.

In remote areas people telephone the station to share information. There is an important link between the telephone and the fact many people can hear at once. People hear about delays in flights, they ask if anyone has seen a hunter who is overdue. In Chilliwack, BC the local cable television system placed a warning regarding possible flooding in the area on its video bulletin

board. Those who didn't see it obtained the message by telephone from neighbours who had.

In more urban areas cable television billboards have displayed Canada Manpower jobs with telephone numbers, a shopping survey with price comparisons, and lost and found information. This service might eventually include announcements of meetings, agendas, and entertainment. Media can provide this basic service function.

INSTRUCTION AND "HOW TO"

These programmes can be simple how-to knit, garden, cook, etc. shows. Since these programmes are teaching, the common-sense principles for instruction apply: gradual progression in lessons, each step clearly stated, review, etc. It's possible to use devices such as graphics, puppets, and animation. A group of women in Toronto used all these methods similar to "Sesame Street" when teaching Ukrainian on their programme.¹⁷ Since learning is improved when there are feedback possibilities and support material, you might want to consider some of the techniques developed by the discussion formats.

It's important for some kinds of information that you communicate not only how to do it, but also some impression of the experience. Dramatizing, acting it out, usually works well. "Do your own divorce"¹⁸ was a programme which began with a discussion between people involved in divorce proceedings. Two phone numbers were displayed for questions. Since much of the information that was needed included the ability to perform in unfamiliar and often formidable court surroundings, a mock court scene was held. In this case giving a picture of what kind of real-life drama one would be asked to play is as important as supplying the information.

DOCUMENTARY

Some documentaries are like visual essays. They include, in one package, background information, a more in-depth look at causes, a number of points of view. They examine a subject and the viewer is called upon to accept or reject the conclusions. They are usually made to be understood without such things as written support material that discussion or teaching programmes might have.

Documentary essays may deal with issues, for example, what effect will the planned highrises have on our district? In this case there would probably be illustrations used, still photos of the present street, and a mock-up photo of the same shot with the highrise added. In this way as well as interviews, graphs, or visuals of similar circumstances with a voice making comments, as many methods as possible are found to illustrate the points being made and the information given.

"Chasse et pêche"¹⁹ wanted to illustrate the differences between modern hunting and fishing techniques and those of forty years ago in northern Quebec. The visuals

demonstrated modern skills and modern equipment like ski-doo's, while the sound track carried the comments of an old-timer:

La sleigh l'soir, on attach'a ça. Comme je vous l'ai dit qu'on avait des cordes, qu'on s'fesai't nous autres avec d'la corde à moissonneuse. Aujourd'hui c'é toute en nylon, M'sieur, pis c'é toute ben astiqué. Dans l'temps, on ava pas ça nu autres. Dans l'temps, on s'trima avec c'qu'on ava. Ca fec on est parti. On est parti sur une bonne randonnée tranquillement, on n'a pas fatigué nos chiens trop vite pour pas resté pris. Parce que les chiens quand ça poigne le souffle, là, ça arrête pas. Là, quand ça arrête-là, c'é pu r'partable, pis ça prend un p'tit morceau d'viande ou ben une pétite carresse pour partir. Aujourd'hui, c'é sûr qu'avec les ski-doo qu'y parte ça, pis ça part. Mais quand ça brise, c'pas d'service. Ah non! Ca vaula pas les bons vieux chiens qu'on ava dans l'temps.

But documentaries can be documents in the sense that they try to capture an impression of someone's real world. It is often an attempt not to tell the audience what it's like to be a poor family in a small town in northern Ontario or the rich president of the largest supermarket chain in Montreal or an emotionally disturbed child, but to reveal through the actual person's recording of his/her own experiences what it is like to be in any of those worlds. These examples of conventional documentary subjects are usually interpreted more or less by the maker of the film or tape. Increasingly people are documenting their own experiences for various uses. If a group documents (by taping) one of its meetings or a consensus on an important issue, it can simply record that step in the project or use it to represent that group's position.

Parallel Institute in Montreal²⁰ video taped a citizens' action which took place in a local bank. The action initially involved many residents opening accounts a week earlier. When they all arrived to deposit their pennies simultaneously with the workers who had just received their pay checks, they managed to bottleneck the regular business. The purpose was to attract publicity for a grievance the citizens held against the bank. And it was successful. They video taped the action to simply have it documented. The tape might be useful for later discussions about the kinds of actions the group would consider taking. If subsequent steps were video taped and edited, it would become a documentary about the progress of the group.

Both documentary essays supplying information not easily obtainable locally, and documents or records of important local experiences, can be important parts of discussion in community projects and issues.

Discussion formats

The following section talks about two types of discussion formats. The first refers to discussions that take place during the programme itself, that is on discussion programmes. The second refers to group discussions

that are stimulated by the programme; the second might be called a discussion method.

DISCUSSION PROGRAMMES

Discussion programmes differ from both talk shows and documentaries. In talk shows, the central personality provides the main attraction and center of attention. There are the rigid talk shows that plan the talk beforehand and parade different guests every three minutes. And there are relaxed shows that interview one person for thirty minutes. But we still tune in because we like the host's point of view, the number of movie stars he has as guests, or his well researched questions. On the other hand, the centre of attention for us in discussion programmes is the subject matter. We listen to the chosen subject being discussed by a number of people. Documentaries also deal with a particular subject from several points of view, just as discussions do. But documentaries use different interviews, backgrounds, and illustrations to examine a subject. Simply because a documentary must organize all these things it makes more of a statement than a discussion would. A documentary is an integrated, complete programme while a discussion remains more open ended. You can organize a talk show only to a limited extent by the quality and diversity of your guests and the questions you suggest; the summing up is left more to the audience.

In small communities these characteristics of discussion programmes are very useful. Probing documentary journalism is often demanding and sometimes damaging. The discussion method can bring together people who are involved in different sides of an issue. The audience can draw their own conclusions from listening to their interactions.

Here is a list of television discussion formats used by "Citizens Forum 1956-57."²¹ Discussion programmes for a general audience seemed to have changed since then only by leaving out the audience participation.

Cross-examination: A method often used for highly sensitive topics. It involved presenting both sides of an argument, followed by a period of questioning by a panel of experts or studio audience.

Debate: The debating style was usually employed for highly sensitive or controversial topics about which public opinion had polarized.

Discussion based on quotations or questions: This method was felt to be appropriate for academic or abstract topics. Questions and/or quotations were usually submitted by the general viewing audience. These submissions were then examined and several of the more relevant ones were chosen for discussion. This served to keep the discussion within the bounds of the audience's interest and level of comprehension.

Informal conversation: This method was considered desirable when discussing complex and perhaps controversial subjects which involved an important personality or required a specialist's knowledge.

Large panel: This method was employed at times when a cross-section of opinion and thought rather than the intensive development of a subject was felt to be appropriate. Usually light subjects were chosen for such broadcasts.

Reverse press conference: This was a novel method of presenting a subject and, as the title implies, involved the questioning, by public figures, of critics of public policy.

Inter-city panel discussion: The method was valuable as a means of putting regional and/or ethnic viewpoints against a national background or viewpoint.²²

As some of the above examples demonstrate, audience participation has always been considered important in discussion programmes. "Counterfoil,"²³ a Toronto group, developed its own discussion format that asked its audience to provide information for the programme itself, to suggest topics and to participate in the discussion. The group made a programme about highrise living. They video taped interviews with people in their highrise apartments. These people were asked, as well as the necessary experts, to come to the cable television studios for the programme. The subscriber list was called until five people agreed to come to the studio. This is an advantage that cable has over broadcast; an audience list that you can contact directly. This method also publicized the programme as well as collecting names of people interested in other topics. During the programme the original video tape was shown and was followed by a discussion with the people in the studio.

"Toronto Idea"²⁴ was a programme to complement an exhibit at city hall organized by the Toronto Association of Architects. This exhibit resulted from their request for anyone's ideas for improving Toronto. During the programme, people who sent in ideas were interviewed in the studio. Phone lines were left open for viewers to call with their ideas. The person answering would draw the caller's ideas on large sheets of paper facing the camera. The callers could direct and comment on the drawings and became very involved. The caller might decide that he wanted a flat instead of round roof or ask if the lines could be darker. Watching his idea take on some concrete form gave the caller time to concentrate and elaborate. Occasionally the person sketching would refer to an earlier drawing of a related idea and ask for the caller's opinion. It was a very effective method of discussing ideas in a concrete way.

There have been other ways of involving audiences. Some of the radio programmes of the CBC's "Farm Forum" were broken down into two parts, the first consisting of an intercity link between two discussion panels, and the second of commentary provided from the listening audience on the discussion that took place the previous week. This commentary was taken from hotline programmes carried by a number of private radio stations affiliated with the national network.²⁵

"Sur le vif,"²⁶ an Ottawa-Hull programme, used phone-in lines to receive information and requests for information from their audience. After this local public affairs

show finished broadcasting, they continued to video tape the hosts in front of a blue background answering incoming calls. If any of these calls were used in the next week's programme they would replay the footage with "extraits d'appels reçus jeudi dernier" superimposed. They often added chroma key footage of the subject concerned behind the hosts. During the week they did their own investigative reporting on a selection of subjects taken from the calls as well as returning calls that were recorded on the phone-in line left open during the week.

They dealt with rumor information, such as the possibility of the Government Printing Bureau being moved. This call would be replayed with visuals. Displayed at the end was "Cette information est-elle exacte? Qui peut nous le dire? 725-1015." The main item on the programme might involve a phone recording of a woman tenant explaining her problem with Bill 12 (with a graphic of an apartment in the background). This would be followed by an explanation by the hosts of Bill 12 and finally a discussion between two representatives of the tenants' associations of Ottawa-Hull and Gatineau.

DISCUSSION METHOD

At first glance the discussion method could be considered a diversion from the question of formats. But the direct involvement of media with people and their problems has been a type of programming since 1917. In that year a Russian train carried a self-sufficient film unit, labs and editing room into small towns. This unit made films of immediate problems and used discussion methods to solve them. Since then, different groups have continued this use of media and continued to develop structures and formats for these purposes.

The discussion method uses the programme to bring a group of people together and to stimulate both discussion of the problem and what action might be taken. This format or method is directly involved in the social life of the community. It is very different from formats such as talk shows developed for mass broadcasting. One of the biggest differences is the relationship with the audience. It's not a question of speaking through mass broadcasting on television or radio to isolated individuals in separate living rooms. It's finding and directly speaking to interested groups. With the discussion method, individuals within each group can discuss with the immediate reactions, comments, and support of their neighbours, whether or not the problem is a real one for themselves. The group, as a unit, can make decisions, acting on any conclusions that might be made.

By the forties the NFB had groups of viewers all across the country. Their distribution system consisted of NFB projectionists hauling projector and film through a regular circuit of one-night stands. Since people watch film in groups, the group structure was ready made.

Discussion programmes and guides were attempted without great success. It was found that hog farmers watching "How to grow fat hogs" would burst into

discussion but less homogeneous groups needed the assistance of a chairman. A discussion method²⁷ was developed. The chairman was responsible for providing an informal atmosphere, involving everyone, encouraging people to talk to each other and not to him. Short, open-ended films were designed to provoke discussion. Many people now came not so much for the screening as for the discussion afterwards.

"Read-Listen-Discuss-Act" was the motto of the radio programme "Farm Forum," begun in 1935. They wanted to provide good information about the very immediate rural problems of their audience, supplying tools for action as a group. The radio forum depended on three separate but interrelated programming techniques. They were designed to bring the listening group to a discussion.

First, the study materials were distributed to each group to provide background information. Second, the group listened to the panel discussion on the radio which brought out conflicting opinions. Third, the group was left to discuss and structure these conflicting opinions into an acceptable form.

The forums and the early NFB films did bring information that was needed into these groups. Through audience participation formats and meetings with the groups, the forums were especially aware of what kinds of information needed. But at some point it becomes obvious that some of the information required must be generated by the local people themselves.

In a dense urban situation it can be valuable to have block discussion groups where you can gather in someone's kitchen or backyard to show information tapes or a video tape made by the next block discussing their mutual problem. Again, after the needs are identified and the group formed, media can be used to make suitable information available and initiate discussions between different groups.

The Forum and NFB programmes were national, they dealt with people already more or less grouped, and usually had specific goals or projects to achieve. The discussion method can be used on a more local level to initially help identify common problems and to help form the groups. This is the kind of process that groups such as Challenge for Change, Parallel Institute Community Development Corporation Montreal, and the Sky River Project, Alaska are exploring. In Colin Low's article (above) he explains some of the principles including individual editorial rights developed in the projects he was involved with.

The amusement guide to Commercials: short bits

Commercials on conventional television do not last any longer than one and a half minutes and are often less. They're usually not made to explain anything but to make an impression, over and over.

There are commercials that don't say very much but are full of spectacular photography or film techniques

(often influenced by experimental films). This kind is in the business of impressing you by simply associating the product or service with, say, a style of life. The soft drink ads of the sixties used strobe lights and hysterical bodies. Now it's the real thing back on the farm with slow shots of grandma and grandpa. Perhaps it's because everyone knows commercials are commercials and aren't "real" that they manage to get their message across.

Parodies of commercials and anti-commercials have been popular on cable television. Children especially like to parody commercials and seem to automatically understand the roles. Anti-commercials can also deliver consumer information.

Commercials compulsively keep up with the times. The interview commercials are faced with the problem of convincing us that just outside the grocery store is a lady who is not only just like you but is also holding a significant product. How do they convince us that she's real? They capitalize on our tendency to accept some images and techniques as more real than others. News clips with the abrupt ending, hasty lighting, and hesitations by the person interviewed convey a feeling of actuality. So does a lot of cable television programming for many of the same reasons. We often think of this kind of television as more real than a slick production and perhaps CommercialCials have capitalized on our changing expectations.

The short, repeated format has other uses than advertising. The NFB has developed film loops over the last ten years. They are two to four minutes long and designed to be repeated. They make a series according to particular objectives such as special learning problems for children but also for general audiences. Some of what the NFB discovered with these loops probably influenced the methods on "Sesame Street." The repeated commercials for learning use many of the tricks for memorization: rhymes, songs, patterns, visual stories, and associations. And they're fun. This short repeated method is effective for teaching by rote.

Even to teach, a commercial has to be interesting. But to get back to advertising techniques, you may simply want to be sure you attract people's interest to something else (a meeting, a major programme).

This method is good when you only have a minute of someone's time and you want to tell him/her about something they'd be interested in. You may only have a minute with the person on a street corner with your video monitor and play-back unit, or you may insert a promo in the regular cable television programming. People will stop for a minute by a bus stop to watch a tape loop (or perhaps listen) if you can catch their interest with a gimmick, music, joke, a visually surprising shot, or a strange sound. A commercial entertains rather than demands concentration on a serious issue. The serious issue is what you want them to listen to on the advertised programme or at the meeting.

The CRTC policy allowing Canadian cable television companies to delete US commercials²⁸ from incoming US stations makes it possible to use this time to

promote causes, meetings, or other community activities.

The possibilities of using those spaces could spill over. Use them to advertise local talent (a one minute song by Mrs. Elliot on harmonica, or Ulric Walsh step-dancing). A local artist could explain one work, a song writer could sing one song. Slides could be used when a local building's history is commented on. There might be a quick news-interest item or any local person speaking his mind. Information on public meetings and events could be set up.

There are many things that fit into such a short time limit. In fact it might be worthwhile for you to consider short community programmes if your message can be condensed. A short message repeated frequently can be very effective.

The story-telling formats

All stories are either "The adventures of..." or "The problems of..." and the way of telling these serial stories hasn't changed much through silent films, comic strips, radio, or TV. The Exploits of Elaine, The Fates of Flora, The Active Life of Dolly of the Dailies—these are the early 1900s silent film relatives of the problem type of serial television programmes. In fact, television serials have quite a few relatives and they all look remarkably similar. And they also seem to survive transplantation into other media with great success. In the thirties comic strips such as "Little Orphan Annie" easily became radio serials. And from the silent film, to the radio series, to television series came: "...with his faithful Indian companion, Tonto, the masked rider of the plains...The Lone Ranger rides again!" Remember "Jake and the Kid," "The Craig Family" after the noon-hour stockyard reports and the Dominion Observatory time signal?

If you are interested in writing or producing this type of programming, the above ancestry might give you some very stalwart and long-lasting characters to learn from. One advantage of story-telling is the way in which moralizing and "so he/she learned his/her lesson" becomes entertaining. Video can be a useful tool if you are developing your own stereotypes. Playing back improvisations can help you develop the role.

On broadcast television there are basically two kinds of problem-solving series. The first type is usually a professional's action-packed adventure while working on a case. The second deals with family problems and situations.

Being serials or series means both types must place their main character in a new situation each day or week. It is important to remember that the character does not change; Lucy is always Lucy, and Marcus Welby is always his reassuring "Father knows best" self. You may, then, wonder about the value of this new adventure each week. What it does is give the character an excuse to assert those same old reassuring characteristics of super-human strength, justice, wisdom,

prejudice, or bungling under the stress of circumstances. The character is appealing because (s)he never changes, no matter what happens.

ACTION-ADVENTURES AND CASE HISTORIES

If you have a set of characters, you must ensure new situations every week or day. The adventure problem-solvers end up being policemen, doctors (or better still, a doctor and policeman as in "Police Surgeon"), reporters, magazine writers, detectives. This seems to be the repertoire of jobs that will reliably supply new challenges. The new challenge or problem is usually set up in three minutes and solved during the rest of the programme.

The shooting style of these series is similar to the average movie. The locations are recognizable, for instance, murder in the underground parking garage. The cameras are in the middle of the action. They move around taking shots from different angles, from different distances. Since the audience sees pictures of the action from many angles and directions, it feels in the middle of it. The camera acts as the audience's eye which is able to see all around.

This style of shooting follows the Hollywood suspense film methods. But there are other ways to dress this particular emperor. In 1966, CBC made its own adventure drama, "Wojeck." Formerly the CBC's series such as "Radisson and des Groseilliers" followed the conventional methods of shooting. "Wojeck" was entirely filmed with a hand-held camera (the first CBC drama so filmed). They used non-professional actors from the story's location environment in supporting roles. This intimate style of shooting and the use of an identifiably real location gave this format a convincing sense of realism. Surprisingly, it was a locally-made soap opera that saw the power of combining this kind of realism with the soap opera format.

DOMESTIC PROBLEMS

There are soap operas which take the emotional cliff-hanger approach to story-telling. There is also the kind that complete the story each day or week. These can be the situation comedy types or the many children's programmes like cartoon characters. Talk provides most of the action in these kinds of programmes. There are few gun battles and chase sequences.

The action programmes are taped on several locations and later these pieces are edited together. When the location is limited to one place the producer switches between shots taken by several cameras to make the final tape. The audience may be live, or "canned" and added in later. It's possible to make these programmes very mechanically. When emotion is needed the appropriate music is played on the sound track.

The téléroman, "De c'oté-ci d'la rivière,"²⁹ understood how this format could be adapted to local means and situation. One of the producers³⁰ of the eight episodes explained: "L'histoire du téléroman fait ressortir les

problèmes sociaux d'ici, ceux du chômage, de l'éducation, et même des conflits de génération." The téléroman gives life to different characters and social groups by telling the story of unemployed trying to find work in the Hull region.

The producers used hand-held portapaks to follow the characters in and out of drugstores, back alleys, and houses in Hull, Quebec. They combined a casual, intimate shooting style and locations that everyone knew with strong, identifiable character types to create a powerful sense of immediacy. Here is an example of the dialogue:

(Gertrude range quelque chose dans le frigo. Jacques fait un jeu de patience sur la table de la cuisine. Elle va vers lui, s'arrête, se met les mains sur les hanches et dit d'un air découragé...) Gertrude: Ah non! Tu vas pas encore r'commencer ton maudit jeu de patience! Jacques: (avec indifférence continue à jouer tout le temps) Pourquoi pas? Ça aide à avoir d'la patience! Gertrude: T'és pas écoeuré de r'commencer toujours la même maudite affaire! Tu pense pas que t'srais plus utile si tu cherchais une job à place? Jacques: Y'en a pas d'job! Tu l'sais ben chriss, tout l'monde le dise à radio, à télévision, partout! Gertrude: Es-tu allé au bureau d'placement au moins à matin? Jacques: Ben oui! Pis l'gars que j'voé, y commence à être écoeuré de me voir toué 2-3 jours! Y m'a dit que si y'ava quelque chose y m'appellera, qu'ça serva à rien d'y aller! Gertrude: Cé toujours c'qui disent! C'est rien qu'pour se débarrasser de toé! J'espère que tu t'laisseras pas faire! Que tu vas y aller pareil!

(Jacques hausse les épaules. Mais aussitôt le téléphone sonne. Elle va répondre brusquement et répond d'une voix ennuyée et fâchée tout en continuant à regarder son mari.)

This dramatic format can be a powerful vehicle for dealing with immediate problems and presenting strong local images. It can be a straightforward, dramatic presentation of local problems as in the example above or it can be used as parody. If you were concerned with improving the relationship between doctors and women and if you dealt with a separate health problem in each episode of a "Marcus Welby" parody, you would simultaneously debunk a convention and supply useful information. The story-telling dramatics can make your opinions, information, and views of the situation involving and entertaining.

Central personality formats

The particular attractive qualities of the (weekly) television or radio host(ess) or moderator is one of the main attractions of this type of programme on conventional television. Their central role can be as a stand-up comic (in the vaudeville tradition, e.g. Johnny Carson), a singer ("Boubou dans le metro" or Ian Tyson), or political interviewer (Patrick Watson). These shows can be game or party entertainment shows. They can also be talk or interview shows. Both have a series of guests

and/or a variety of subjects with the host(ess) supplying the continuity. Discussion programmes on the other hand supply a topic as the central focus and invite people to clarify it through discussion.

On network television these programmes play a major role in promoting the stars of the mass entertainment world. The same set of guests circulates between a certain number of similar shows. In Quebec the circuit is made up of radio, tabloids, television, records, and film promotion. The media don't compete but work together promoting and creating their own star system. The Americans have always known the promotion value of this interrelationship. In fact a similar media interrelationship to support English Canada's productions does not exist. Even the conventional television programmes set up on the personality format such as Elwood Glover's "Luncheon Date" interreact with the American star system circuit.³¹

The telephone has made some interesting changes in the host-dominated interview programmes. For one thing, it has increased audience participation. One night at Graham Cable³² when the guest didn't show up for the discussion of local political affairs, the host decided to try phoning his audience. Cable television, as explained earlier, offers the advantage of knowing the names and numbers of your subscribers:

"Hello Mrs. Gonsolas, are you watching Channel 10?"

"No!"

"Well, if you turn your dial to Channel 10, Mrs. Gonsolas, you'll see me speaking to you on..."

This direct use squashes Mrs. Gonsolas between her phone and that man speaking to her on television. The host decided to continue this method while continuing to bring in guests to speak on political issues.

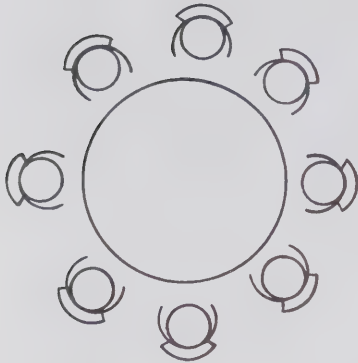
Peter Gzowski's CBC radio show, "This Country in the Morning," is an example covering both talk and games type of format. He either talks to guests in his studio or phones them up. He plays parlour games using the whole country (and the CBC network and telephones) as his parlour. A storyteller in the Maritimes begins a story, it is passed on across the country (room? space begins to make no difference) during the rest of the morning.

Interview shows on television have not always been studio productions. In the early days of television the National Film Board produced an interview series for CBC faster and cheaper than a comparable length of film (\$25,000 to make a twenty-minute film, \$1,200 for twenty minutes of television). These pressing circumstances created a method of portable film-making which will sound familiar to many groups and cable television programmers involved in live television production.

Dans le temps où ils imprimaient et le son et l'image sur une pellicule, ça s'appelait en anglais le "single system" (just as portapaks are now).... Ça

The architecture of talk/interview

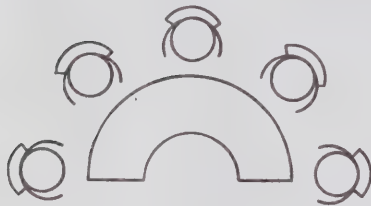
TYPICAL FLOORPLANS



1. Round table

No dominant position

Host does not direct, but stimulates maximum exchange of views

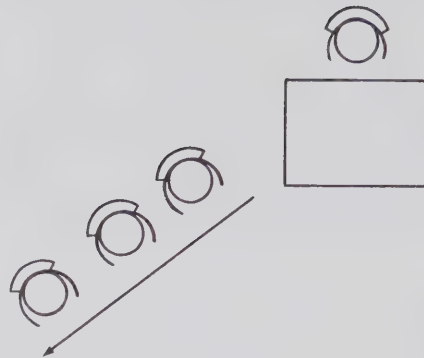


2. Modified round table

Host more central—directing

Position to right of host is dominant

Exchange still possible



3. L shaped talk

Host more important than guests—legs hidden

Guests exposed—dominant guest to host's right

Guests move one position down for each entrance

Preplanned exchange



4. Host panel

Host in full control

Panel acts on cue—no dominant position

Minimal exchange



5. Confrontation—face à face

Host inquisitor(s) in position of maximum strength

Guest completely exposed

No exchange

avait été abandonné par les techniciens qui étaient devenus trop puristes. C'était très difficile à faire: lorsqu'on coupe d'une scène à l'autre, on coupe aussi la trame sonore. Donc ça prend un personne qui est et monteur, et ingénieur du son, et réalisateur, et auteur parce que, en somme, on fait le montage sonore et visuel dans la camera.³³

He (the filmmaker) had to know the exact place to make a cut while shooting. Music, sound effects, and off-screen commentary had to be tape-recorded in advance and fed into the camera at the proper time during the shooting.³⁴

On est allé directement faire des séries dramatiques en se servant de la même technique.³⁵

This method stretched the limits of film to suit the nature of television. Films are usually put together in bits. This kind of television is more like organizing a theatre performance.

Examples of the wandering camera (portapak) interviews are achieving the same directness and immediacy but in a more relaxed manner. In "Carmelites de Dolbeau"³⁶ we visit the interior of the cloister with special permission from the bishop. We see a nun go in one door as we go through another nearby. She opens some curtains behind a grate and the camera respectfully interviews her and her companion through the grate. Intercut with the interview was footage of one camera's wandering about the place. In an individual cell the camera looks about the room from the cross, to the bed, to the cupboard and Bible. Outside it zooms in on nuns walking in the garden, pans across from one to another. The limitation of one camera encourages shooting a scene as your own eye would examine it.

Perhaps because the talk show format was originally influenced by radio, radio again seems to be developing it in a curious and open way. The following example is simple yet related to and supportive of the community. The host takes the responsibility of finding and being of service to individuals rather than depending on a ready-made network of guests that come to him.

We had many members of the community on the air, particularly musicians. And there is no magic formula. We have many street musicians in Vancouver who are excellent. I would go out on the streets of Vancouver and listen to their music. I would say, "I'm Alan Garr and I have a show on CKLG-FM and if you're not busy in an hour and a half, I'd like you in my studio." And it is no more difficult than making an appointment with someone and asking them to come to your studio, putting them in front of a mike, and turning it on. And that's the way you get local talent on the radio.

I had people who made their own instruments and could talk about them, young people who were making dulcimers, for example. I had people who were street musicians, but who were also going east to be members of the National Youth Orchestra. I had flautists, guitarists, people talking about jazz—music of every description.

I generally followed the same procedure with poets, although there are fewer poets reading on the streets of Vancouver than there are musicians playing there. You'd simply find out about who the poets were in the city, either because they were publishing or giving readings. You go to them and you say you have time available for them to read on the air, to talk about themselves and their poetry, if they would like to use it. And with that kind of offering they usually came down and used it.

We tended to emphasize, among other things, community skills because I believe that there are a number of needs in the community that really go across any educational lines, or class lines, and that's just how to get along. There is information that people need that they really don't have available to them. We would have car mechanics on who would talk about how to fix your car; people could phone up with general problems and I don't want to make it sound like we only talked about changing tires: we talked about obsolescence and what General Motors might have in mind for us, and why you shouldn't be driving a chopper down the road. We had people who were interested in wine-making; people who were interested in weaving; cooks; gardeners; goat-herders; we would talk about how to feed birds and make candles; and at times we got into incredibly sophisticated discussions about camera technique and technology. We also dealt with the subject of survival which is a problem common to many young people; this programme was aimed generally at people between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five. I would also get doctors, and members of medical clinics—dentists, people familiar with conventional western medicine and others familiar with acupuncture—to sit down and talk about both the philosophy of their work and about the specifics of why dentistry or medicine might cost so much, and how they'd fix whatever is wrong.

Now before you think that this is simply a great switchboard of events that goes on, and seemingly loses interest, I found in my position that my audience was at least as intelligent as I was, but simply didn't have as much information in some areas that I did. And it was kind of my job to bring that information to them. And I find that more than interesting; I find it entertaining to see people exchange information, where you can kind of see a light go on in their head, and they say, Aha, at last I've found something where I can have more power in terms of controlling my own life. And that was the kind of entertainment function that show performed.³⁷

As you have just read, there are many different formats for many different purposes. You can relate to your audience totally differently through discussion formats or methods than through a talk show designed for mass television. Through a combination of telephones and radio you can set up a flexible information system for your immediate community. Hopefully you will find

some of these programming formats interesting in the light of your particular situation. As you have also read, even the most conventional programming formats are gradually changing. Changes have arrived through people working with the medium and the programming until both clarify and serve their needs, whether the purpose is survival or just good times. Sometimes this

process can be a real struggle, other times it takes the ability to relax and sense where the media fit most naturally with the community. Of course, the only way to understand what changes have to be made in formats is to try them out. It's a problem of teaching the tool to speak our language.

Footnotes

1. *Through Navajo eyes: an exploration in film communication and anthropology*, by Sol Worth and John Adair. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1972.

2,3. Made by Patrick Kelly at the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design.

4. Experiment in interactive television conducted by Mike Mills, Paul Haley, and John Carter at the University of Pennsylvania.

5. "Spectacle Téléthon," Vidéotron Ltée, Beloeil, Quebec. Most video tapes from cable television systems mentioned in this article were collected from cable television systems by the CRTC Research Branch in the summer of 1972. The Research Branch is interested in both video and audio-tape programmes from many sources.

6. Central Cable Television Ltd., Collingwood, Ontario.

7. Jarmain Cable TV Ltd., Newmarket, Ontario.

8. Campbell River TV Association, Campbell River, BC.

9. Vidéotron Ltée, Beloeil, Quebec.

10. A copy is available from Le Vidéographe, 1604 rue Saint-Denis, Montreal 129, Quebec. Send one sixty-minute half-inch video tape, a return envelope and postage, your name, address, and title of tape.

11. Rogers Cable TV, Toronto, Ontario.

12. The transcripts noted below show how video tape was used to document problems from individuals' points of view (in Labrador), to show these problems to the decision makers (in Ottawa), and to tape their response to take back to Labrador: Memorial University of Newfoundland, Extension Service, "Transcription of the video tape presentation on the study of communications on the Labrador Coast to the Department of Communications and the Bell Telephone Company of Canada, Labrador, 1970." Also, "An interview with the Honorable Eric Kierans, Minister of Communications and Memorial University of NFL Extension Service on Communications on the Coast of Labrador, Ottawa, 4 December 1970."

13. "Broadcasting would be effected by means of a rudimentary microphone and amplifier housed in a box attached directly to the transmitter. A female jack might be added for input from a cassette tape recorder-player. The cost of this Facility for Local Input (FLIP) is about \$200, as compared to \$3000 to \$8000 for a simple recording studio. The emphasis would be on satisfying the local need for shared information and not on the need to emulate background music radio." In "Local broadcasting in remote communities," by Doug Ward, CBC, May 1973.

14. Canadian Wirevision Limited, Vancouver, BC.

15. "Assemblée du Conseil de Ville," Gagnon TV Ltée, St-Félicien, Quebec.

"Pond Inlet field trip," by Doug Ward. CBC Report, March 1973.

16. "U titky twitky," Graham Cable TV Limited, Toronto.

18. Calgary Cable, Calgary, Alberta.

19. Produced by the Fish and Game Club, Dolbeau, at the Dolbeau TV Service, Dolbeau, Quebec.

20. Parallel Institute, PO Box 6, Station D, Montreal 6, Quebec.

21. Early forms of "special interest" participatory programming on CBC radio (1937 to 1953) evolved from the concept of the adult study group, using radio as a means for informal education and self-help. University extension departments used radio in this way as early as 1932 (Antigonish Movement, St. Francis Xavier University), and by 1936 a number of such departments banded together to form the Canadian Association for Adult Education. This association was primarily responsible for the rural education group listening programme "Inquiry into co-operation" (1939) and the successful, long-running "National farm radio forum" (1941-1953).

The CBC during those years allowed a variety of broad-based voluntary organizations direct access to the airwaves, facilities to make their programmes, and regular time slots in the schedule. In 1937 the Workers Educational Association (WEA) broadcast a series of programmes on labour relations. The Canadian Institute of International Affairs (CIIA) prepared numerous programmes between 1939 and 1942. Both were involved in the creation of a series during the war aimed at post-war education for reconstruction. This series grew into the long-running "Citizens' forum" (1943-1952).

22. "Citizen's forum: Its origins and development 1943-1963," by Richard G. A. Mackie. MA thesis, University of Toronto, 1968, p. 111.

23. A group which programmed at Keeble Cable, Toronto, Ontario.

24. A group which programmed at Rogers, Toronto, Ontario.

25. Mackie, p. 109.

26. A local broadcast television programme made by Radio-Canada, Hull, Quebec.

27. The NFB made a film in 1955 explaining this method called "Let's talk about films."

28. "Canadian broadcasting, a single system," Policy Statement on Cable Television, 16 July 1971. Public Announcements: Decision 72-364, 21 December 1972, Calgary, Alberta; Decision 73-396, 3 August 1973, Cable television on Montreal Island; Decision 73-395, 3 August 1973, Cable television in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

29. Made at Laurentian Cablevision, Hull, by Denyse Marcoux, producer, with Denyse Lafleur-Achim; text by Claude Leclerc. Copies are available from Le Vidéographe, 1604 rue Saint-Denis, Montreal 129, Quebec. There are eight episodes, thirty minutes each. Send sufficient half-inch video tape, return envelope and postage, your name, address, and title of programme.

30. Denyse Lafleur-Achim.

31. The conventional cultural circuit or system is worthwhile examining on all levels. Compare English Canadian television guides. French Canada's *TV Hebdo* includes feature articles about Quebec programmes as well as the television listings. In 1973 they began to publish an annual *Encyclopédie Artistique*. This newsprint edition included biographies and pictures of Quebec television stars, articles on television stations and their programmes, on dramas, animation, and sports, the history of television, and indexes of production houses, theatres, etc., etc.—In other words, a booklet that everyone with a TV set found useful was also used to promote, explain, and support the local system of production and the people involved. Send to: *Encyclopédie Artistique, TV Hebdo*, Les Publications Eclair Ltée, 9393 avenue Edison, Ville d'Anjou 437, Quebec, for a copy. *TV Guide*, the English Canadian equivalent, is a syndicated feature package from the US with the Canadian listings inserted in Toronto. This package provides popular feature information such as the latest FCC regulations (the American CRTC) or articles about US "guerilla television".

32. Graham Cable TV, Toronto, Ontario.

33. Bernard Devlin in *Cinéma d'ici* by André Lafrance with Gilles Marsolais. Montreal: Editions Leméac, 1973, p.66.

34. "The National Film Board of Canada: its task of communication," by Clifford James. Thesis, Ohio State University, 1968.

35. Devlin, p. 67.

36. Dolbeau TV Service, Dolbeau, Quebec.

37. Alan Garr, CRTC FM hearing, October 1973.

A list of terms

This is intended as a guide to a selective list of terms and not as a comprehensive listing of film and broadcasting vocabulary.

AM (radio)—Amplitude modulation in the 535-1605 kilohertz range. Range not limited to line of sight. See: FM.

Affiliate—Station, usually independently owned, that grants (and is obligated to) a network use of specific time periods for network programming through contracts. Remainder of broadcast day is programmed locally.

Alternate Network—Usually used to describe a system of programme distribution outside the conventional media. Often set up by groups with a particular interest (e.g. a large company or women's involvement group). Tapes are made and mailed to a special constituency.

Amplifier—Device through which an electronic signal is strengthened. In a cable television system, used to boost the signal as it travels through the cable.

Automatic Gain Control Mixer—Mixer which processes audio signals automatically controlling the level of microphone and other channels, eliminating the necessity for manual control.

BBG—Board of Broadcast Governors. The BBG, created by the Broadcasting Act of 1958, regulated the Canadian broadcasting system until 1968 when the government re-wrote the Broadcasting Act, terminated the BBG, and created the CRTC.

Band—Range of radio frequencies within two definite limits and used for a definite purpose; for example, the standard broadcast band extends from 535 to 1605 kilohertz, television from 54-216 megahertz. Some other bands or ranges of frequencies are the Mid-band, Sub-low band, etc. These bands, taken together, comprise the frequency spectrum.

Bicycling—Delivering a film, or video tape, or audio tape from one station to another in lieu of supplying individual prints or providing simultaneous distribution of a programme by microwave, etc.

Broadcasting—As a noun, either of the electronic media, radio or television. As a verb, sending out a signal on the airwaves which is capable of being received by a radio or television set.

Broadcasting Act—Legislation which establishes the concept of the Canadian broadcasting system and defines the policies to be implemented to preserve this system. The Broadcasting Act (rewritten in 1968) has three main sections: (1) broadcasting policy for all of Canada, (2) creation of the CRTC, the regulatory body, (3) mandate of the CBC, outlining its responsibilities.

Copies can be obtained from Information Canada, 171 Slater Street, Ottawa, Ontario.

CAB—Canadian Association of Broadcasters. Professional association of private radio and television stations and systems owners. Located at 85 Sparks Street, Ottawa, Ontario.

CATV—Community antenna television. See: Cable Television.

CBC—Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Canada's publicly-owned English radio and television networks (in French, called Société Radio-Canada), whose mandate was established originally by the Canadian Broadcasting Act 1936, and is now included in the Broadcasting Act 1968. See also Broadcasting Act.

CBL—Canadian Broadcasting League. An association of citizens concerned with the development of radio and television in Canada. Located at 53 Queen Street, Ottawa, Ontario.

CCTA—Canadian Cable Television Association. Professional association comprised of owners and operators of Canada's cable systems. Located at 130 Albert Street, Ottawa, Ontario.

CCTV—Closed circuit television. Television which is not transmitted or received over the air but is conveyed from point of origin to the receiver by cable.

CRTC—Canadian Radio-Television Commission/Conseil de la Radio-Télévision Canadienne. Canadian broadcasting regulatory body. Located at 100 Metcalfe Street, Ottawa, Ontario.

CTV—CTV television network. The private English-language TV network. Head office: 42 Charles St. East, Toronto, Ontario.

Cable (coaxial)—Series of conductors insulated from each other and arranged in a variety of patterns to perform transmission, control, audio, and power-supply functions in an electrical system. Coaxial cable is designed to "pass" a wide range of frequencies and is particularly suited for video transmission.

Cable System—See: Cable Television.

Cable Television—Wire TV services which use elaborate antennas to take TV signals from local and distant areas and transmit them to subscribing households via cables. Cable television requires a special hook-up into your television set. The cable television companies charge a regular fee for this service.

Call Letters—Letters assigned by the Department of Communications and used to identify each station licensed.

Challenge for Change-Société Nouvelle—A programme administered by the National Film Board under the

guidance of a committee including it and the following governmental departments and agencies: Agriculture, Communications, Central Mortgage and Housing, National Health and Welfare, Indian and Northern Affairs, Labour, Manpower and Immigration, Regional Economic Expansion, Secretary of State, Citizenship. It is designed to improve communications, create greater understanding, promote new ideas, and provoke social change through the use of media. The NFB began the programme in 1967. It was formalized in 1970-71 when the other government departments and agencies were invited to participate. Its address is PO Box 6100, Montreal, Quebec.

Cominterphone—A radio/telephone experiment in northern Canada at Rankin Inlet, in the Keewatin, Northwest Territories. Original proposal made in 1971. It is run in cooperation between the CBC, DOC, and Bell Northern Canada.

Common Carrier—Applies to business enterprises of such character that public policy requires their communication services to be made available equally to all. Transmits point-to-point messages to individuals, but not to the general public (e.g. Bell Canada is a common carrier, but CBC is not).

Community Channel—In its policy statement on cable, issued 16 July 1971, the CRTC urged the owners of Canada's cable television systems to set one channel aside for the use of the community. This is commonly referred to as the community channel. Most contain a mixture of local origination and community and information programming.

Community Council—Elected or appointed citizens' organization in a community which assumes responsibility for the use and scheduling of the community channel as well as the distribution of funding to various projects.

Community Programming (on the locally programmed channel)—"This process involves direct citizen participation in programme planning and production. Access to the community channel is the responsibility of the cable television licensee but the means which are employed to best further the use of a channel for the local citizenry, to establish fair access, and to facilitate production, can be as varied as necessary to satisfy local needs. Where conflicts occur concerning fair and balanced use of the locally programmed channel which cannot be resolved between the cable television licensee and the person or group desiring access, then such issues should be referred to the Commission." CRTC Policy Statement on Cable Television, 16 July 1971.

Conseil de développement des media communautaires du Québec—Recently created to encourage community involvement in all facets of programming throughout the province. The committee is financed by a grant received from the provincial Department of Communications. There is a permanent staff at 1207 St. André, Montreal, Quebec.

Converter—Electronic device which, wired to an individual cable television subscriber's set, enables his television set to receive more than 12 channels.

Coverage Area—Geographical area reached by a given station. Based on a station's physical facilities and pattern of signal. A coverage map shows those areas covered.

Dedicated Channel—Channel (in use or available on demand) solely devoted to a particular type of purpose or service, e.g. community, education, multiculturalism, weather reports, etc.

Department of Communications—Canadian government department responsible for administration of the Radio Act and other aspects of Canada's communication systems. DOC is responsible for establishing technical standards and for maintaining the technical quality of broadcasting. Also known as Communications Canada. Located at: 100 Metcalfe Street, Ottawa, Ontario.

Dissolve — Merging of one scene into another.

Dollying—Camera and equipment are supported on wheeled platforms called dollies. Dollying is backward and forward movement of camera, called "dolly in, dolly out". See also: Trucking.

Drop Line—Line that runs from the main (coaxial) trunk cable into the individual cable television subscriber's residence; also called drops.

Dubbing—(1) Transcribing a sound track from one recording medium to another, such as dubbing a film sound track on audio tape; (2) also, to create copies or dubs of existing film or video programmes from the original.

Editing—To change, by cutting or splicing, one scene to another. This can be accomplished by physically cutting and splicing the tape, or electronically.

Ethnic Programming—Term applied to programming originating in any language other than English, French, or Canada's native languages.

FM—Frequency modulation (radio) (88-108 megahertz). Broadcasting method that eliminates electrical interference and provides greater fidelity than the more common AM (amplitude modulation) broadcasting. Range restricted to line of sight. There are more FM than AM frequencies available.

Format—(1) Type of programming station transmits, e.g., in radio, middle-of-road music, pop music, all-news, talk, etc. (2) Script or programme plan outlining aims of the programme and methods to be used to achieve these aims. Technique used to present programme. Also general designation of programme type, e.g. magazine format, soap opera, talk, actuality, variety, etc.

Global—Global Television Network.

Graphics—Visual displays (charts, pictures, graphs, signs, maps, etc.) used as part of programme content.

Half-inch Video—A popular size of inexpensive video tape. It is commonly used in community programming.

The development of an editing process (see readings, at the end) by the NFB has considerably improved the level of quality. Also used are quarter-inch, three-quarter-inch, one-inch, and two-inch video tapes.

Hands-on—Term used when an individual or group undertakes to look after technical production and actually handles the equipment when making a programme.

Hardware—Refers to all the physical equipment used in radio and television programming. See: Software.

Head-end—Reception or entry point of signals being carried and modulated by a cable TV system. Modulators at the head-end put signals on a channel frequency.

Independent Station—Refers to a station which is not affiliated with a network. Originates some or all programming, may purchase others from networks or syndicates. Independent stations in Canada are sometimes called private stations.

Information Programming (on the locally programmed channel)—“This form of programming can provide a counterpoint to the concept of community programming. It can inform the community about matters which are of concern and interest to the citizens. Programmes may be of a highly specialized nature, appealing to minority audiences, or they may be of a general interest. Effective informational programming should make for more improved and more responsible participation in community programming.” CRTC Policy Statement on Cable Television, 16 July 1971.

Intervention—Statement by any person or group wishing to support, oppose, or modify and application(s) announced by the CRTC for a public hearing by the CRTC. See: “CRTC and public participation,” above.

LPRT—Low power relay transmitter. An unmanned system used to relay programming to communities by repeating the programming of a master system.

Licence Application—In order to operate a broadcast undertaking in Canada it is necessary to be granted a licence by the CRTC. Formal application should be made to The Secretary, CRTC, 100 Metcalfe St., Ottawa, Ontario. Licences are granted or denied after the formal application forms have been filed and examined, and a hearing involving the Commission and the individual (or group) has been held. The licensing period is established at the Commission’s discretion.

Licence Renewal—A broadcast licence is granted in Canada for a specific period of time. Before this time period expires the licensee must make application to the CRTC for renewal.

Licensee—Individual or group granted a broadcast licence by the CRTC.

Live—(1) Indicates that a piece of equipment, e.g. a microphone, camera, is in active use. (2) Direct transmission of a programme or event at the time of origin.

Local Origination Programming (on the locally programmed channel)—“This type of programming usually consists of coverage of local activities of all kinds. Whereas community programming involves local citizens in the planning and production process, local origination programming usually involves the coverage of organized local activities under the direct supervision of the cable television system staff.” CRTC Policy Statement on Cable Television, 16 July 1971.

MATV—Master antenna television. Used to bring television reception to large buildings, especially an apartment or complex of apartments; eliminates need for individual antennae.

Monitor—Unit of equipment used for the measurement or observation of programme material. Monitors are generally referred to according to function, e.g. picture, waveform, VU, etc.

Network—(1) Simultaneous transmission by a group of broadcasting stations of identical programme material. (2) Channels and facilities necessary to this simultaneous transmission.

NFB(ONF)—National Film Board (Office National du Film). The NFB was created in 1939 by the National Film Act. Former head John Grierson described their mandate this way, “to interpret Canada to Canadians and to the rest of the world.” Head Office is: National Film Board of Canada, PO Box 6100, Montreal, Quebec. The NFB has field offices in all major Canadian cities.

Pay TV—System whereby an individual pays directly for programming (through a box attached to the set). This service (found in hotels, etc.) can be expanded into homes and could include special programmes available only through this method.

Portapak—Name given by the Sony Co. to their original portable VTR unit. It is now used for any portable VTR unit operating from batteries.

Prime Time—Generally considered to be from 6 p.m. to midnight. These hours are considered by the electronic media to be the time when they have the largest audience.

Private Sector—System (number of stations) owned by an individual or a corporation and operated commercially.

Programme Director—Individual in charge of scheduling and programme decisions, especially on the cable television community channel. In smaller systems the owner will often perform this function, or the director may work part time.

Public Sector—Publicly owned and receives its funding from the government.

Radio-Canada (Société Radio-Canada)—CBC (French).

Remote—Telecast originated outside the studio.

Scheduling (programme)—Decision-making concerning the times at which programmes are to be shown or heard. In community programming work, the decisions are made on the basis of the greatest benefit to the community served or on a first-come first-served basis.

Selecto-TV—A unique service in Quebec created by Vidéographe. Subscribers to a cable system are sent a list of available vidéogrammes and invited to call the local channel and make specific requests. An animator tells them when the programme will be shown. See list of readings.

Software—Name (borrowed from computer services) given to actual programme content, i.e. the reel of tape is hardware, the programme on it is software. See: Hardware.

Studio—Room specially built for the process of taping, film-making, or broadcasting programmes.

Sync Sound—Synchronization; the simultaneous projection of picture and accompanying sound. Also, the electronic pulses of picture transmission and receiver must be synchronized to produce a stable image on the television screen.

TBA—To be announced.

TVA—Les Télé-diffuseurs Associés. The private French-language television network.

Telecine—Television film and slide projection equipment, which enables images to be converted to electronic form.

Télé Inter-Cité—Third French language television network, not yet in operation.

Trucking—Lateral movement of camera dolly and camera. Camera movement is commonly called a truck, so

movement is described as “truck left, truck right.” See also: Dollying.

Trunk Cable—See: Cable.

UHF—Ultra High Frequency. In radio and television, any frequency of 300-3000 megahertz. In television, channels 14-83.

VHF—Very High Frequency. Television channels (2-13), 54-216 megahertz.

VTR—Video tape recorder(ing). Combined audio and video recording on magnetic tape. See: Portapak.

Vidéographe—Vidéographe contains a videotheatre, production and editing facilities, and a library of tapes created by citizens or groups. Free programmes are shown in the 155-seat theatre which has six 24-inch monitors back to back in a circle and seats arranged for discussion. Consulting books for audience reaction and the vidéogrammes are available from 9:00 a.m. to midnight. Vidéographe will also dub any tape free (just send them a 30-minute tape). They have a catalog you can receive by writing to: Vidéographe, 1604 St. Denis St., Montreal, Quebec. They also provide production facilities (and equipment) to citizens and citizens' groups whose project ideas are accepted by the Planning Committee.

VU Meter—Volume unit meter. Shows relative loudness of your microphone to other audio inputs as established by the volume controls on the audio console.

Wipe—Electronic effect, one picture seems to push the other off the screen, either left to right or top to bottom.

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